

New York Saturday Journal

A HOME WEEKLY FOR WINTER NIGHTS AND SUMMER DAYS.

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THE PRAIRIE ROVER; OR, The Robin Hood of the Border.

BY BUFFALO BILL,

(Hon. Wm. F. Cody,) Author of "Deadly-Eye, the Unknown Scout; or, The Branded Brotherhood."

CHAPTER I.

THE PRODIGAL'S RETURN.

The lingering rays of the setting sun tinged the western horizon with crimson glory, and burnished up the gilt cross upon the steeple of an ivy-clad church, situated upon the banks of the lower Mississippi, until it looked like pure gold in the rosy light of dying day.

Into the portals of the church was moving a solemn and melancholy procession, following the cold form of some departed friend who had gone from life to join the departed hosts in the village of the dead, for around the humble structure were sleeping many who had passed away.

In the churchyard an open grave stood ready to embrace within its clayey arms the one whom soon it was to forever hide from mortal view, and ever and anon the deep notes of the tolling bell would burst mournfully forth, trilling, dirge-like, as it echoed along, over river, woodland and meadow, until the sound died away upon the balmy evening air.

With melancholy cadence the sound of the tolling bell fell upon the ears of a horseman, who was slowly wending his way down the river road, which led by the little church, and a look of sorrow would sweep across his handsome face, the next moment to give place to a frown as some internal feeling of bitterness brought a half-smothered curse to his lips.

Both horse and rider were travel-stained and weary, as though they had journeyed far since sunrise; still, the horseman sat erect in his saddle, his elegant, agile form swaying gracefully with the movements of his steed. His face, though fatigued-looking, was one of striking appearance, but there rested in the handsome dark eyes and upon the finely-molded mouth an expression of recklessness and bitterness, evidently brought there by a life of wild dissipation, although he was scarcely more than of age, and his upper lip was barely shaded by the down of manhood.

As the tolling notes of the bell again smote upon his ears, the horseman, with an exclamation of impatience, urged his horse forward at a more rapid pace, and, ere long, drew rein before the churchyard, where now stood the sexton, leaning upon his spade.

A glance of recognition passed between the two, a look that changed to surprise upon the sexton's face, as he said, bluntly:

"Well, Master Ernest, you are just in time to be at the funeral; but who could have believed you would dare come home?"

"I dare do anything, Ben Baldwin; but who is it that is dead?" the young man asked, in an indifferent tone.

"What! you do not know, then, that your murder of your cousin Howard was the death of your poor mother?"

Like a drunken man the horseman reeled in his saddle, and then, springing to the ground, advanced toward the sexton, his face blanched white, his lips quivering, as he cried:

"Ben, do not deceive me, but tell me, is my mother dead?"

The voice was deeply sad, and the sexton replied, with some feeling of pity:

"I tell the truth, Master Ernest; yonder bell is tolling for her funeral."

With a groan from his inmost heart the young man heard the news, and then, with firm, rapid step, he entered the door of the church and strode down the aisle, toward the spot where rested the coffin and its dead.

Every eye was upon him, and several would have barred his way, but they shrunk back before the gleaming eyes of the young man, who, undisputed, moved on, until, with a heartrending moan, he sunk down upon his knees, and rested his arms and head upon the casket, crying, in a deep and mournful voice:

"My poor, poor mother! It is I, your son, your wicked boy, that has brought you here!"

In solemn voice the funeral services were continued by the minister, the conscience-stricken man still kneeling beside the coffin; then the pall-bearers advanced to carry the body to the grave.

A touch upon the arm, and the young man arose, and quietly took his place behind the coffin, following it with slow tread and hard face up the aisle, and into the churchyard, and to the side of the yawning grave.

A short while longer, and the services were over, and those in attendance turned away, but not without casting many strange glances back upon the tall form, who, with bitter face, stood beside the new-made tomb, gazing fixedly down upon the earth that hid forever from his view his mother.



The steed ridden by the infuriated young man fell dead in his tracks, hurling his rider to the ground.

One by one the crowd departed to their homes, none of them speaking a word to the silent, sorrowing, lonely man, who seemed wholly unmindful of their presence and departure.

Slowly daylight died away, and twilight crept upon the earth, to in turn give way to darkness; a darkness of short duration, for soon the moon arose from her cloudland couch and spread a silvery luster over all, brightening up once more the cross upon the spire, and causing the white marble tomb to look like grim specters of the departed dead.

At last the young man turned sadly away, and approaching his patiently waiting steed, mounted and slowly continued his way along the river road.

Suddenly the sound of rapidly-advancing hoofs broke on his ear, and the next instant a horse and rider came in sight, the animal urged to his greatest speed, and still lashed cruelly as with mad bounds he rushed on.

A few more bounds, and the steed uttered a wild, frightened scream, which was echoed by one less shrill, but more human, and instantly the animal's speed slackened.

A few savage yelps and angry growls, another almost-human cry from the struggling animal, and the moonlight revealed the cause of the rapid flight of the steed, upon whose haunches now clung with savage tenacity half a dozen dark forms—wild wolves of the forest that had chased him to his doom.

Instinctively the lonely horseman forgot his sorrows, and spurring forward, dashed upon the scene, while rapidly, with ringing crack after crack, his revolver flashed forth, startling again the silence of land and river.

Driven from their prey, the ravenous wolves darted away to seek covert in the forest, while the horseman, dismounting, rushed forward to receive in his arms the fainting form of a young girl of scarcely eighteen.

The form was slight but graceful, the face pale but beautiful, and with admiration undisguised the horseman gazed upon the lovely features, and tenderly placed the maiden by the roadside, while he hastened to the river and filled his hat with water.

A short while, and the beautiful eyes were opened, a sigh parted the ruby lips, and consciousness returned.

"Ah! where am I? I have had such a terrible dream!"

"Lady, it liked not to have been a dream, but a fearful reality; but you are safe now, and I would see you home, if you will allow me," kindly said the horseman.

An instant the maiden gazed into the sad,

handsome face of the man before her, and then said:

"I remember now: I was returning home, when I was chased by wolves, and you saved me from a fearful death."

"I was so fortunate; but it is late now, and we had best hasten. Though I once lived near here, I do not recognize in yours a familiar face."

"No, sir; my father has lately purchased the Riverdale plantation; I am Miss Reginald."

"Indeed! I have often heard your beauty spoken of—pardon me—my mother has written me of the purchase of the Riverdale plantation, and of your father, your brother and yourself, Miss Reginald."

"I believed I had met all of the neighboring gentry, sir, but in you I fail to recognize an acquaintance, though, after this night, you shall ever have a warm place in my heart as a friend; can I ask your name, sir?"

"The face of the young horseman flushed crimson in the moonlight, then turned deadly pale, as he remarked, after a moment's hesitation:

"Miss Reginald, my name will bring to you no pleasant memories, for well I know that it is bandied about with crime and dishonor. Suffice it, then, to kindly remember one who has saved your life, no longer than the present moment, for he is unworthy of a longer remembrance."

The maiden glanced with surprise into the handsome face of the man before her, and as if pitying him, unknowingly she drew nearer, and laying her hand gently upon his arm, replied tenderly:

"One who has saved my life, sir, shall ever hold a dear place in my heart; but surely you can never have been guilty of crime."

"Miss Reginald, I have grievously sinned against God and man; but tarry not longer here, or your friends will be anxious regarding you."

Instantly turning away, the horseman led the animal ridden by the young girl forward, and placed her in the saddle, soothing the still frightened, but slightly injured steed with his deep and quiet voice. Mounting his own horse then, the two rode off at a quick pace, until they came to a large gateway—the entrance to the Riverdale plantation home.

Here they drew rein, and the horseman said sadly, "Miss Reginald, here I will bid you adieu. For fear you will think kindly of one who does not deserve it, I will tell you that I am Ernest Maltravers."

Without another word the horseman turned

away, leaving the surprised maiden still gazing after him, while she murmured:

"Ernest Maltravers! can it be he whose wild and reckless life has broken his mother's heart, and who, only a few short weeks ago, took the life of his cousin! Surely his face is not the index to a guilty soul."

"Well, be he crime-stained and Cain-accursed, he has saved my life, and shall ever be remembered with kindness."

Thus saying, Ruth Reginald rode on, and a few minutes more brought her to the door of her lordly home, where she was welcomed by her father and mother, who, in dismay, heard the story of her narrow escape, and the name of the man who had been her preserver.

CHAPTER II.

BRANDED WITH CRIME.

ERNEST MALTRAVERS was the only child of a widowed mother, who, at the death of her husband, had been left a plantation home upon the banks of the Mississippi river, and sufficient wealth to live in luxury.

Proud of her handsome boy, Mrs. Maltravers had humored his every whim, until he grew up, a wild and reckless youth, unrestrained by fear of man or laws.

Of a generous nature, Mrs. Maltravers had, when Ernest was in his sixteenth year, adopted her nephew, the son of a brother of her husband, and at once between the two cousins, Ernest and Howard, had sprung up a warm brotherly attachment, for, in spite of his wild life, the young planter had a noble heart, and had urged his mother to send for his cousin as soon as he heard he was left alone and penniless in the world, by the loss of his parents at sea.

At the age of eighteen, Ernest Maltravers and Howard were sent to college in a northern State, and from their crossing the threshold of the classic halls, the two youths became rivals in their studies and in all the athletic sports; still their friendly relations continued, until across their lives passed another and deeper shadow of rivalry, for Howard loved a young girl, who in turn did not love him, but bestowed her affections upon Ernest, for she was a selfish woman of the world, young as she was, and soon knew the heir of the Maltravers estate from the dependent upon an aunt's bounty.

Whether Ernest returned the love of the maiden, or delighted in her society merely for the enjoyment of a flirtation, none of his fellow students knew; but, at any rate, Howard became jealous of his cousin for awhile; and

then, changing his manner once more, was as friendly as ever toward him.

Thus time went on until one pleasant afternoon the two cousins went forth for a walk in the forest, and from that walk only Ernest ever returned alive to tell the horrible story of how he and Howard commenced an altercation, which grew more bitter until it ended in a challenge from his cousin, which, in the heat of anger, he accepted.

Without seconds the two cousins fought, facing each other at twenty paces, and at a word drawing and firing with their revolvers, which they had with them.

Both were splendid marksmen, and when Ernest had received a severe wound in the arm, he had in turn shot Howard through the heart.

Such was the story of Ernest Maltravers upon returning, faint and bleeding, to the college, and the finding of Howard's body, the revolver still clutched in his hand, the two empty chambers, and the whole appearance of the scene, corroborating the statement of the surviving cousin.

Still he was looked upon by the public as a murderer, and that night slept in a felon's cell.

Days passed away ere Ernest Maltravers was brought to trial, and the end of it was that a jury of his peers cleared him; for no other evidence could be found against him than what he had himself made known.

From the prison walls Ernest Maltravers came forth a changed man. No longer did he join his gay companions in the midnight revel, for he seemed like a stranger in a strange land, as not one kind word had come to him from home, from his mother, whom he so fondly loved, and whose teachings he had so disregarded; for Ernest had indeed led a fast and willful life at college, and only his attention to his studies, and extreme politeness to his teachers, had prevented him from being sent in disgrace from the halls of the university.

Turning his back upon his prison, after his release, Ernest slowly wended his way toward the depot, and ere long was flying southward toward his boyhood's home.

Arriving in New Orleans, he went to the hotel, and met there, with a degree of pleasure he could not disguise, one who had known him from boyhood, and who had ever been his friend, the overseer of his mother's plantation.

"Well, Ernest, I am really glad to see you; and what a fine man you have grown to be; said the kind-hearted overseer, warmly grasping the hand of the young man.

"Yes, Mr. Morton, I am no longer a boy; would to God I was—but what of my mother, for since my—my—the death of Howard, I have not heard one line from home."

"And no wonder, Ernest, for its doors are barred against you, for you see Howard Maltravers was continually writing home and to the neighbors, telling them of your mad dissipation, until the whole community were down on you, and it only needed the sad climax that followed to make them believe you a perfect fiend."

"What do you say, Mr. Morton? that Howard Maltravers wrote unkind reports home about me?"

"Continually he was writing about your fast company, gambling, and dissipation, in spite of his professed urgent entreaties to you to leave off your evil life."

"Strange, most strange. I now remember the coldness that slowly crept into my mother's letters, and yet how kindly she wrote to Howard. Still I believed him my best friend, until that fatal day. He was indeed a snake in the grass!"

"Just what he was, Ernest, I tell you, for, you see, when his body and papers came home—"

"Was Howard Maltravers brought home?" asked Ernest, in a tone of angry surprise.

"Certainly; your mother sent on for the body, and it was me that got hold of his papers; and, Lord! how I cursed him when I read how he had been in secret plotting against you."

"What could have been his object, Morton?"

"The Maltravers estate is a rich one, my boy, and—"

"Yes, I see all now—I see all; he lies in his grave in honor, and I live in dishonor. But, Mr. Morton, when did you leave the plantation?"

"Some weeks ago, Ernest; for, you see, your mother and myself had a few words about Howard, whom, I was sorry to see, had turned her against you, and I gathered togeth-

er my traps, and here I am—a gentleman of leisure, and one to let."

"Mr. Morton, you must not suffer for this, and believe me, all will come right. Now I must get me a horse, and at daylight in the morning I will leave for home."

Thus the two friends parted, and with bitterness at his heart, Ernest Maltravers set forth the following morning to visit once more the home of his boyhood.

The reader has seen how sadly he was disappointed in his welcome, for ere he reached his plantation, he came full upon the funeral cortege of his mother, borne to an untimely grave, where, he felt, misrepresentation and calumny against her son had placed her.

True, he had been wild and wayward, and foolishly extravagant, but his conscience acquitted him of the damning crimes laid at his door by one whom he had loved as a brother, whose home had been his home, and whose purse had been his purse.

"Yes," he cried, as he rode on homeward, after leaving Ruth Reginald at the gateway leading to the Riverdale mansion, "yes, he poisoned the heart of my mother against me; yes, I see all now; and when he fell by my hand, it was looked upon as the crowning act of crime in my wretched life. Oh, my poor, dead mother, whose heart was broken by the reported infamy of your son! If you but knew my heart was true, you would look down from your throne on high and forgive and bless your boy!"

Crushing back a groan of mortal agony, the lonely man rode on in silence for a few moments, and then continued, half aloud:

"Oh, how have I been deceived in one I loved as a brother! Ha! yonder looms up the church before me, and its shadow falls upon my mother's grave, and his!"

Turning his horse into the river highway, for in going to the Riverdale plantation, he had ridden back a mile into the country, Ernest rode up to the low fence surrounding the church, and, dismounting, advanced toward the spot where slept the bones of the Maltravers' for three generations.

Soon, with uncovered head, he knelt upon the damp, fresh earth, beside his mother's grave, and the moonlight streaming full upon him, showed his face white and stern.

Long he knelt there, with head bowed in silence, and then, rising, glanced furtively upon a glittering marble shaft a few yards distant.

Slowly he approached it, as if with dread, and while his face grew hard and bitter once more, read the inscription:

Sacred to the Memory
OF
HOWARD MALTRAVERS,
Aged, 22 years.
Died, May 1st, 18—.
Erected by his Adopted Mother."

"Great God! here lies beneath this marble tomb one whose life was a lie, and yet who is remembered in honor; and I, by whose hand he fell, am Cain-accursed and condemned in the eyes of those who were my friends, for Morton told me how I was hated by all, and even at my mother's grave I found not one hand to press mine in kindly sympathy."

"Yes, here lies the martyr, and I am the outcast. Ah, me! clouds surround me upon all sides, and the sunshine of my life has gone from me."

Sadly Ernest Maltravers turned from the graves of his mother and the one whose life he had taken, and as if urged on by cruel memories, he bounded into his saddle, drove the spurs deep into his tired horse, and dashed along the moonlit road at a rapid pace.

A ride of two miles brought him to a large gateway leading into a dense forest, through which glimmered a distant light, and toward this he directed his way, and soon drew up before a rambling and spacious mansion.

It was his boyhood's home, the birthplace of kindred generations before him; but no longer, as of yore, did lights blaze from the windows and doors, for the shadow of death was over all, and desolation, quietude and gloom reigned supreme.

A loud hail, and from the servants' wing of the mansion came forth a dark form and darker face, which Ernest appeared to recognize, for he called out:

"Well, Toby, this is a sad welcome to give the lord and master of Woodlawn."

"By de providence of de Lord, if it hain't Mars Ernest! Bless your soul, chile, I knows dat voice in de darkest night! How is you, Mars Ernest? and I's so glad to see you home one't more, kase de ole place ain't no place without you. Here, ole woman, gals, boys, git out of dat kitchen an' come welcome de boss!"

The kind welcome of the old negro servant brought tears to the eyes of Ernest, and touched him to the heart, and he felt less alone in the world, as, in obedience to the call of old Toby, half a dozen of the family servants came forth and greeted him.

A half hour more, and the lonely master of Woodlawn had partaken of a light repast, and in the solitude of his room was pacing to and fro, his bosom filled with conflicting emotions, and his brain a whirl of bitter thoughts, for Woodlawn seemed no longer the home of "auld lang syne" to him, for the faces and forms he had loved there, in years gone by, slept their last sleep in the churchyard on the river's bank.

CHAPTER III.

ERNEST MALTRAVERS' CONFESSION.

For days after his return home, Ernest Maltravers never left the plantation limits, except to visit each evening at sundown the grave of his mother.

Many of the neighbors were wont to see him there as they passed by, but they set down his visits to remorse of conscience, and stories of his fast life at college being thoroughly believed, and his killing of his cousin, caused them to turn the cold shoulder to him, and those who had known him from boyhood were wont to pass him by without a look of recognition.

But though their conduct toward him at first cut Ernest to the heart, he soon became indifferent, and then daily became more stern and hard in his nature.

Twice had Judge Reginald and his son Ralph called at Woodlawn to see the lonely heir and thank him for the service rendered in saving Ruth from a terrible death, but each time Ernest had declined to see them, and thus he had never met the father and brother of the maiden whom he had never ceased to remember, since the eventful night of his return home.

As to his future course Ernest had not decided, for old Toby had informed him that it was rumored in the neighborhood that his mother had disinherited her only child, and left her entire property to charity; but of this Ernest was not assured, as the family lawyer had been called to a distant State to be absent several months, and until his return nothing would be known regarding the will.

"Surely, my good mother could not have

been so embittered against me, Toby, as to take from me my rightful inheritance," said Ernest, sadly.

"Dunno, Mars Ernest; ole mistis might set ag'in' you when Mars Howard write to her you have your fast horses, and live wid a lady who wasn't your wife nohow; and he say, too, dat you hab your hounds, and was throwin' money away at cards."

"Howard! Howard! how was I deceived in you! Well, time makes all things even, and I will face the worst with a bold front. Toby, bring my saddle-horse to the door."

A few moments after Ernest Maltravers was dashing along the river road leading to the churchyard, when suddenly he came full upon a stylish phaeton, which he was passing without a look at its occupants, and a sweet voice cried:

"Mr. Maltravers! oh! Mr. Maltravers!"

The first thought of Ernest was to dash by with a bow, but checking his determination, he drew rein alongside of the carriage, which had come to a halt, and raising his hat, bent low before Ruth Reginald, whose lovely face bore a joyous smile at again meeting him.

"Mr. Maltravers, I am delighted to again meet you, to thank you for my life, and to present to you my father and brother."

As Ruth spoke she extended her gloved hand, which Ernest grasped as he glanced down into her lustrous eyes, and then turned his look upon Judge Reginald, a stately, fine-looking gentleman of fifty, and Ralph, a handsome young man of twenty-five.

"Miss Reginald, the pleasantest memory in my lonely life is that I was the humble instrument to save you from harm," replied Ernest, and then turning toward the gentlemen, he continued:

"Judge Reginald, I must ask you to pardon my seeming rudeness in declining to see yourself and son, when you called at Woodlawn; but, to speak plainly, I fancied myself in this neighborhood, and cared not to place you under the embarrassment of meeting one who was regarded with the aversion in which I am held in the community."

Ernest Maltravers spoke in a stern and bitter tone, and his words brought the tears to Ruth's eyes, while both her father and brother were touched by his utter loneliness, and gazing into his handsome, noble face, felt that perhaps he had been condemned unjustly by the world.

"Mr. Maltravers, with your past life we have nothing to do; but with the present everything, for upon our happy home to-day would rest a gloomy shadow never to pass away, had not your courage saved my daughter from a death too terrible to dwell upon. Riverdale plantation you know, and there you shall ever be a welcome guest, even though the world bar its doors against you."

"Will you return with us to tea? Come, I ask it in good faith."

Ernest hesitated an instant, and then caught the eye of Ruth Reginald, who softly said:

"You will not refuse, Mr. Maltravers?"

It was a beacon of hope held forth to the lonely man, and like a ray of sunlight breaking through the clouds, he could not but gaze wistfully toward it, struggle an instant within himself, and accept.

From that day Ernest Maltravers loved, with an idolatrous worship, Ruth Reginald, and though he knew that she was the promised wife of another, he still clung to his affection with tenfold tenacity.

And Ruth? Before she had met Ernest Maltravers, she had believed she loved a young army officer, then stationed at Baton Rouge, for he was handsome, of dashing and sunny manners, and a brave, dashing cavalry captain, who turned the heads and won the hearts of nearly all the girls he met.

Besides, Captain Percy Le Roy was a man of wealth, and the descendant of one of the oldest families in America, a boon companion of Ralph Reginald, and a favorite with the judge, and his course of true love had glided smoothly along until Ernest Maltravers crossed the path of Ruth Reginald.

Two months more, and the beautiful maiden would have been bound for life in the matrimonial chains cast around her by Percy Le Roy; but then a change came over the spirit of Ruth's dream of love, for the dark and fascinating face of Ernest Maltravers looked down upon her, and coupled with the fact of having saved her from an awful doom, and the romance that surrounded his life, not to speak of his being an exile in his native place, altogether caused the young girl to turn most kindly toward him, and their every meeting but served to weld more firmly the chains that were encircling her.

Ere Ernest had visited the Riverdale plantation three times, and he knew that he loved her, and finding that her over-zealous going forth to him and forgetting its loyalty to the man to whom she was engaged, she brought to mind all that had been said against Ernest, of his cruel affair with his cousin, and of his wild life, and between her and her awakening love arose a strong barrier.

Whether Ruth, under ordinary circumstances, would not have conquered her growing attachment, cannot be said; but an unlooked-for meeting with Ernest brought to her mind only that which was good in his nature, and almost without an effort not to do so, she felt that she could not resist loving him.

Unmindful of the lesson taught her by her near escape from death, from remaining out late without an escort, Ruth was returning one pleasant evening from visiting a neighboring plantation, and her way led by the churchyard.

It was just after dark, and a full moon looming up above the eastern horizon cast a flood of silvery light around, and caused the monuments of the dead to look so weird-like in their solemn silence that Ruth urged her horse forward with the intention of dashing rapidly by the lonely spot, for a feeling of superstitious fear crept over her.

Only a few bounds had her horse taken, when she beheld, patiently awaiting his master, the steed of Ernest Maltravers.

One glance across the glimmering tombs, and the tall form of the master was visible, standing beside the grave of his mother, over which his filial love had, a few days before, erected a marble shaft that glittered snow-white in the moonlight.

Acting upon the impulse of the moment, Ruth checked her horse suddenly, sprang to the ground, and hitching the animal, entered the churchyard with a firm step.

As she advanced, however, her courage somewhat failed her, and nervously she glanced around upon the earthly homes of those who slumbered in the city of the dead.

Timidly she advanced toward the tall form of Ernest Maltravers, who stood with folded arms and uncovered head, sadly and silently gazing downward.

A light touch upon his arm caused him to start suddenly, and his hand to seek his bosom as though for a weapon; but, turning quickly,

he with surprise beheld the maiden beside him.

"Miss Reginald! you here?"

"Yes, Mr. Maltravers, I was passing, saw you standing here and sought you; have I done wrong to thus intrude upon your grief?"

"Miss Reginald, in thought you are ever present with me; but listen, now that you are here standing beside the grave of my mother, and facing the tomb of the man whom my hand placed beneath the sod, let me tell you the true story of the slander cast upon me by my enemies."

"Here, in this sacred spot, I would not swear falsely, and here I would tell you that I am not as black as I am painted, though what others may think I care not. Will you listen, Miss Reginald?"

"I will hear all you have to say," quietly responded Ruth.

A silence of a moment followed, and then Ernest Maltravers said:

"You are aware, Miss Reginald, that years ago my mother adopted my cousin Howard, and brought him to Woodlawn to live; but you do not know that it was at my wish, for I felt for the lonely orphan boy, and longed to have him for a brother."

"Through the years that followed I loved Howard as though he were really my brother, and I believed that he loved me."

"Together we left for college, and then a pleasant rivalry sprung up in our games, studies, and the pastimes of youth, until between us passed the first shadow, when a young girl became the object of Howard's idolatry."

"Strange to say, she seemed to prefer me, and often I would tease Howard by devoting myself to her, although I cared little for her, and was surprised that my cousin did not see her selfish nature."

"Thus matters progressed until one day an anonymous letter came to me, giving me the startling news that a plot existed between Howard Maltravers and the woman in question, to get possession of my property."

"I laughed the idea to scorn, until, upon going to the city for a few days, I received a letter, addressed in Howard's well-known hand."

"Upon opening it, I imagine my horror in discovering that he had made a mistake in inclosing the letters in the envelopes, sending me the one intended for his lady-love, and doubtless forwarding mine to her."

"Horror forbade my reading it; but, startled by the first line I continued on, and discovered, alas, that a deep plot indeed was laid to entrap me, for the beautiful friend who called herself a woman, was to entice me into a marriage with her, either by fair or foul means, and then, between the two guilty lovers, I was to be disposed of, and my sinful wife was to marry my cousin."

"This is terrible, Mr. Maltravers," said the surprised Ruth.

"Well may you say so, Miss Reginald, for it was a most diabolical plot entered into by two who certainly loved each other, but with a love that was guilt itself, and which was to be consummated by dishonor and deadly crime."

"Words cannot portray to you, Miss Reginald, the agony I felt at this discovery; I was completely stunned for a while, but at length felt a longing for revenge; and I at once sought the home of the maiden, who resided in the city where I then was."

"She received me most kindly, but when I abruptly handed her the letter, her face turned deadly pale, and her guilt was assured in my mind."

"Without a word I left her, and returning to college, sought an interview with my cousin, and together we walked into the forest, and I hurled in his face his treachery."

"Surprised at my discovery, driven to desperation at his shameful position, and hating me in his heart, he drew his revolver, but I struck it from his hand and covered him with my own weapon, while I told him I would not take his life without giving him a chance, but let him meet me upon even terms."

"He accepted; we chose our positions, and I turned to walk to my stand, when suddenly a deafening report rang in my ears, and I felt a stinging sensation in my arm."

"Quickly I turned, and again he fired upon me in a cowardly manner, when I raised my revolver and shot him through the heart."

"You know of my trial, Miss Reginald, and what followed, and my return home the very evening that my mother was buried. But you do not know that it was Howard Maltravers who poisoned my mother's heart against me, her son, and who wrote many slanderous letters to the neighbors regarding my course at college. The letters written to my mother I found in her desk at home, and my servants and overseers have told me how he conspired with my fast life around the neighborhood. That I was wild, gay, dissipated, I do not deny, Miss Reginald; but, that I have ever been dishonorable I aver is utterly false, as it is also, that in the sight of God I am the murderer of the man who lies buried there."

"Miss Reginald, my story is ended, and to you I have told it, that in your pure heart I might not be considered the guilty wretch that men call me."

Ernest Maltravers paused, and folded his arms across his broad breast, while he turned his dark, searching eyes upon the maiden, who stood with bowed head before him.

Presently the haughty head was raised, the wealth of golden curls shaken back, and the beautiful face turned upon the man before her, while teardrops glistened in her eyes like diamonds in the moonlight.

Laying her hand upon the arm of Ernest Maltravers, Ruth said in a voice tremulous with feeling:

"My poor, poor friend! how you have suffered. Would that I could take from you the fearful weight of sorrow you bear so heavily."

The eyes of the young man flashed fire, his form trembled, as he replied:

"Ruth, you are the promised wife of another; still I can but tell you that I love you with all the strength of my inmost soul, and were it possible for me to claim you as my own, every obstacle and sorrow then, with you by my side, would vanish forever."

"But no; you love another, and forever are you lost to me."

"No, no, no! do not say that, for I do not love other than you, Ernest Maltravers, and this night will I sever the bonds that bind me to Captain Le Roy," and the maiden spoke with earnest determination and feeling.

"Bless you, my darling; may God forever bless you; but do nothing rash. Wait yet awhile, and all may be well. Come, the night air is growing chill, and I must see you home."

A moment more and the two were mounted and slowly wending their way toward Riverdale, when the sound of hoof-strokes were heard behind them, and the next instant, with clashing sword and ringing spurs, an officer in full uniform rode up, and was passing, when he suddenly drew rein, saying:

"Ruth! why, this is an unexpected pleasure,

for I was on my way to visit you, having obtained a few days' leave."

Ruth somewhat coldly received the outstretched hand, and replied quietly:

"Captain Le Roy, allow me to present my friend, Mr. Maltravers, the gentleman who saved my life some time since."

"Mr. Maltravers, I am glad to meet you, that I may thank you for saving the life of one whose death would take all the sunshine from my heart," and the handsome young soldier held forth his hand, which Ernest grasped with the courtesy of the well-bred gentleman.

"Captain Le Roy, I will now transfer my duty of escort to you. Miss Reginald, I bid you good-evening."

Raising his hat, Ernest Maltravers wheeled his horse and dashed away, to be soon lost from view to the eyes of the soldier and the maiden, who slowly continued their way toward the Riverdale plantation, Ruth's thoughts of a most painful character, and Percy Le Roy happy at again being in the presence of the woman he so fondly loved.

CHAPTER IV.

THROUGH DEATH TO LOVE.

READER, have you not already wondered, as you have kindly perused the foregoing chapters, what connection there was in the scenes and incidents therein related, amid the land of refinement and civilization, and a story of wild, western life, where the crack of the rifle, the war-whoop of the Indian, and the yelp of the coyote are the only sounds that break the silence of majestic nature?

But have patience, kind friend, who thus far has followed me in my story of the romantic realities of life on the frontier. In the succeeding chapter the scene will change from the land of cultivation, amid flowering orange groves, and ripening fields of the cotton and the cane, to the country toward the setting sun, where the prairies stretch forth in boundless magnificence, their downy verdure pressed only by the hoofs of the buffalo and deer, the light paw of the wolf, the moccasined foot of the red-man or scout, or the iron-shod hoof of the trooper's steed, thrust between the border settlements and their savage foes.

Having given my explanation for thus long lingering afar from the scenes of stirring strife, where the characters of this story are destined to play a most active part, I will now once more beg the reader to accompany me to the home of Ernest Maltravers, at a time two weeks after his meeting with Ruth in the country churchyard.

In the spacious library of Woodlawn sat Ernest Maltravers, one pleasant evening just after twilight. The candles were lighted, and their presence discovered two other persons in the room, a stern-looking man of the law, and his clerk, a young man of twenty.

A few moments before, the lawyer and his clerk had arrived at the mansion, and requested an interview with the young planter.

"Mr. Maltravers," began the man of law, abruptly, when Ernest entered the room. "I regret that my continual absence from the State has prevented me from making known to you the disposition your late honored mother made of her property in her will."

"There was no hurry, Mr. Weston, for I had ample means of my own to keep the place running on smoothly; but now that you have returned, it will give me pleasure to hear all you have to tell."

"Not so much pleasure as you may think, sir, for your share is a very small one."

"What mean you, Mr. Weston?"

"Simply that your mother disinherited you for your base ingratitude to her."

"Hold, sir! dare I say that, in thought, word, or act, I was ever ungrateful to my mother, and I'll still your false tongue forever!" and Ernest Maltravers sprang to his feet, his face pale with anger.

"I will make no assertions of my own, Mr. Maltravers, for we all know you care little for human life, but I merely state the words of your much-revered mother, who, in her last will and testament, duly signed and witnessed, did devote her entire property to charity, excepting the slaves, who were all to be set free, and given a small allowance to start them in life."

"The plantation was to be sold, and the proceeds were to go toward building a new church in the neighborhood."

"Are you aware, Mr. Weston, that this plantation and its slaves have been the property of several generations of Maltravers, descending from father to son, according to English law, and that my mother was a poor girl when my father married her?" bitterly asked Ernest.

"I am aware, sir, as the lawyer of the estate, of the fact you mention; but, I am also aware that your mother was left full powers by your father, who could not, of course, expect the career you would enter upon."

"Spare your facetious remarks, Mr. Weston, but continue, sir, with your conversation regarding the will of my late mother."

The lawyer discovered in the face of Ernest no mood for trifling, and resumed:

"Over a certain property in New Orleans, left you by a distant relative, your mother had, of course, no control, together with a few thousand dollars cash she held of yours, as rents of the said property, and which amount of money I have here to turn over to you."

"Over that this, you have no claim, as upon Woodlawn, its slaves, and the remainder of your respected mother's property."

"Mr. Weston, allow me to state, did I see proper I would contest the will that disinherits me, and I believe I could regain my property; but the last will of my mother shall remain inviolate, and not one penny of the wealth she considered her own will I take."

"It is not the loss of wealth, sir, that I care for, but the sad thought that my poor, misjudging mother went to her grave at enmity with her only son. Yet I do not reproach her; I will not cast one unkind word or look upon her memory, but accept the situation as it is, and pray God to forgive one whom I ever loved dearer than my own life."

"The sum due me, sir, I will trouble you to count out at once, for that is my own, and then I will forever leave this hated spot—Hold, sir! bandy no words with me, for I am in no mood to hear you."

"I was merely going to say that if you would intrust in my hands the management of your New Orleans property, I would render a strict account, and—"

"I will see you cursed first, sir! and, hark ye, both of you, until to-morrow morning I will be master in this house, where first I saw the light of day, and where the darkness of an eternal night seems now to be setting down upon my life; so I bid you leave me this instant!"

"Come to-morrow and pillage, sell, and do as you please; but, by Heaven! this night tarry not near me, or I'll not be responsible, hounds of the law that you are, for my conduct."

"Hence, I say! at once!"

A magnificent impersonation of anger looked Ernest Maltravers, as he stood proudly erect in the library, his brow dark, his lips stern, and his right arm pointing toward the door, while his withering gaze fell fiercely upon the lawyer and his clerk.

Both felt that their lives were in danger if they tarried longer, and quickly depositing the bags of gold upon the table, they beat a hasty and undignified retreat, and the rattle of their carriage-wheels was soon heard going down the avenue on its way back to town.

Through the long hours of that lonely night, Ernest Maltravers paced his weary beat to and fro, until the gray glimmer of dawn aroused him to exertion, and he set about his preparations for his departure.

Shortly after sunrise he bade farewell to his servants, and bidding Toby bring his baggage into the town and leave it at the hotel, he mounted his horse and rode away, taking the road leading to Riverdale.

Dismounting before the handsome mansion of Judge Reginald, he threw his bridle-rein to a negro servant in waiting, and ascending the broad stairway, was met by Ruth, who started back on beholding his cold, stern face.

What passed between the two lovers none knew, but an hour after Ernest Maltravers rode away from Riverdale, his face no longer clouded.

Arriving at the hotel in the town, distant ten miles from Woodlawn, he met face to face with Captain Le Roy.

With a slight bow he would have avoided him, when the young officer advanced and said:

"Can I see you in private, Mr. Maltravers?"

"Certainly, sir; come with me to my room."

Leading the way, the two were soon alone; and in a voice trembling with emotion, Captain Le Roy said:

"Mr. Maltravers, I sought you to say that, in your conduct with Miss Reginald, you have fully sustained the character that all give you."

"I do not understand you, Captain Le Roy; be more explicit," quietly responded Ernest.

"I will, sir; you were so fortunate as to save the life of Miss Reginald, and knowing how kindly she felt toward you, although you knew she was my promised wife, you sought her affections, won them, and this day she has cast me off."

"From whom do you get this information, sir?"

"Mr. Maltravers, I beg you not to trifle with me, for I am a desperate man, rendered so by losing the idol of my life."

"An hour ago I saw Ralph Reginald, and in a conversation with him last night, Ruth told him that I was to be discarded, and that she loved you."

"In fury at having his old companion thus set adrift by his sister, and believing you had taken advantage of your service rendered her, to win her from me, and determined she should not marry a man whose name was Cain-accursed, and whose evil deeds were upon every tongue, Ralph Reginald left her to seek you at your home, after he had visited a friend who was lying ill at a plantation near by."

"Determined that Ralph Reginald should not fall a victim to your deadly aim, it was my intention to at once find you, and dare you to meet me in the duello, for without Ruth I have nothing to live for, and if I fall, it will but save the life of her brother."

"At another time Ernest Maltravers might have acted differently, but, smarting under his misfortunes, and feeling that the whole world was against him, he merged into a dangerous mood, and replied, sneeringly:

"Captain Le Roy, I am at your service whenever you desire, and am willing to meet you late this afternoon at the point of land in front of the Woodlawn estate. As I will have no seconds, sir, you had better come alone, and swords being inconvenient weapons to carry, perhaps our pistols will serve us as well."

"As you please, sir; I will be there," and Percy Le Roy turned and left the room.

forms came forth from the house, and mounting the one steed, rode swiftly away toward the river-bank, where was a landing, toward which a steamer was then approaching.

A few moments more of anxious suspense, and Ernest Maltravers and Ruth Reginald had left behind them the quiet plantation homes upon the Mississippi, and were embarked, for good or evil, upon the broad face of the earth, never more to wander together, again, amid the scenes where both had known so much of pleasure and of pain.

(To be continued.)

Love in a Maze:

OR,
THE DEBUTANTE'S DISENCHANTMENT.

BY MRS. E. F. ELLET.

AUTHOR OF "ALIDA BARRETT, THE SEWING-GIRL," "MADELINE'S MARRIAGE," ETC.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE CONSPIRACY DISCOVERED.

LEONA was not without compunction of conscience for the promise she had given to aid in the nefarious project of Rashleigh. He had, indeed, found it difficult to persuade her. But he prevailed finally by arguments founded on her belief that she would really do the girl a service. It had become manifest that, without years of scientific instruction, Elodie could not command the fame and fortune of a prima donna. It was not worth while to continue concert-giving in the provinces. Madame Leona felt not a little disappointed at the result, and listened the more willingly to Rashleigh's representations that a large fortune would come to Elodie on her marriage with his son; a marriage that need be not a mere formality, as the young man was rather deficient in mental qualities, and the inferior of Elodie in education. Once married, her claim on the money, which was barred by illegitimate birth, would be united with that of the young man; and she would enter into instant possession. As soon as she reached her majority she would have the sole control of the property.

Rashleigh was to pay Madame Leona very handsomely for her assistance; and by this promise of remuneration she had been induced to remain with her charge. She had been brought over to consent to aid in the strange marriage, by being convinced that the girl herself, when in possession of independence, would be glad of what she had done. And if dissatisfied the woman reasoned—what so easy as to procure the annulment of such a marriage, and the equitable division of the money!

But Leona resolved that she would take no active part. She would simply attend to the duties she had undertaken, and be ready with help in case of the girl's need of it. She was so delicate and sensitive, an experienced friend ought to stand by her; and then, in the event of trouble afterward, Leona could shelter herself behind the plea that she had had nothing to do with the matter. In fact, she might manage the affair so as to seem ignorant of all that had occurred!

Bright as the morning looked the fair young girl when she awoke, after a night of unbroken rest. The thought of "going home" had been as new life to her. She walked to the windows of her sitting-room and saw the sunbeams lifting themselves from the marshy waste, and the tall trees on the verge gleaming with dew-drops illuminated. She wanted a melody that might have charmed the birds to listen. She threw up the sash, and let the cool, moist air play on her face, and breathed it deeply, as if drinking in health.

When Leona came with the tray of breakfast, she partook heartily of the broiled game, oysters and omelet, and drank the rich coffee with exclamations of approval. When she had finished the meal, she gave directions to complete the packing for their removal.

Leona would not permit her to do anything with her own hands. "You will have need of all your strength," she said. "Any fatigue in your present state is dangerous."

So Elodie merely superintended the work, singing merrily the while, though her voice had nothing of its former power.

"Why have you left out this dress?" she asked, pointing to a white silk laid out on the bed, with its sash and lace berth. "I shall not want to wear it soon in New York."

"But I hoped you would give us the pleasure, on the last evening of your stay here, to see you once more look like yourself."

Elodie laughed. "Am I to be dressed in all that finery—in such a place as this—for the benefit of the frogs that serenade us every night?"

A laugh echoed her words, and Leona started up, pale as death, and ran to the door. It was only Catherine, the maid of all work, who stood looking at the splendid dress through the open door of the bedroom. Madame Leona frowned, and bade her begone, and not come in that way scolding people.

The girl gave her a significant, searching look as she went down the stairs.

"But, indeed, I shall not want the dress," persisted Elodie. "Put it in that trunk."

With some hesitation she was obeyed. By the evening everything was in readiness for a journey. The excitement did the invalid good. She ate her meals heartily, she had gained more than in a week before. She talked cheerfully of her anticipations and plans for the future.

Leona became nervous. How was she to delay their departure the next day, the day on which Rashleigh and his son were to arrive! She had gone too far to retreat. The opportunity of retrieving her fortunes and making herself independent for life, might be marred by the willfulness of her charge.

The difficulty was solved for her the next morning. It was raining torrents.

Leona gave an exclamation of joy when she threw open the blinds, and drew aside the curtains. When she found Elodie up and half-dressed, she told her of the state of the weather. They could not possibly set out in such a storm!

The girl went to the window and looked at the clouds, with expressions of chagrin and disappointment.

"It cannot rain at this rate all day," she observed.

"But, my dear, it would be madness, sheer madness, for you to risk health and life, by venturing out in the wet weather, and you so weak! Have patience; to-morrow will come!"

"I cannot wait till to-morrow!"

"We have no close carriage; you could never reach the station. Be satisfied to wait. I will promise you we will go to-morrow."

"Even if it rains?"

"I can send and engage a covered wagon; we will set off as early as you please. Only make up your mind to stay indoors to-day. See, how heavy the mists are setting! Be as cheerful as possible; I have some illustrated papers you have not seen."

She brought an armful of these, and then went to ring for breakfast.

"I am going down, madame," said the girl. "I cannot stay in my rooms. I must walk a little, and I want to see if the carriage is ready for use."

"I attended to that yesterday."

"Let me have my own way. I am determined to go down."

The breakfast was eaten in the dining-room of the house; a cheerless room enough. But Elodie did justice to the really excellent repast, and walked about the dwelling, making the inquiries she wished, and watching the driving clouds from the windows. She thought they might set out in the afternoon if it cleared; but of that there was no prospect.

Madame Leona quitted her side scarcely a moment the whole day. She strove to keep up her spirits by conversation, yet her own courage began to fail as the hours passed, bringing nearer the dreaded night.

The storm was swept away by a north-west wind about five o'clock, and the sun set clear in a bank of purple and gold resting upon the wooded hills in the distance.

Elodie had sat by the window of the little sitting-room, watching the shifting clouds, for an hour and more; and when Madame Leona left her for a few minutes, she went out into the veranda for a breath of the moist air. She began to walk up and down, her eyes fixed upon the rich sunset promising "a goodly morn."

Suddenly she started, hearing her name uttered in an eager whisper. She saw a head put forth from the angle of the building, and recognized that of Catherine, the attendant.

"Hist—whist!" the woman whispered, with a cautious gesture, as Elodie came to the end of the veranda. "I have been thyrin' all day to get a chance to speak to ye, but the maid—"

"What do you wish, Catherine?" asked her young mistress.

"Oh, whist, for the love of heaven!" she whispered, with agonized looks of alarm around her.

"What do you fear? Do you want to see me alone?"

"Yes, indeed I do; the heart of me will be clane broke intirely if I don't tell ye! I've been watchin' all day—"

"Then come to my chamber. No one shall disturb us there. Come after me."

Elodie went indoors and up the stairs to her own apartment. She locked and bolted the door of the sitting-room, and passing into her bedroom, placed the door slightly ajar.

Presently Catherine came up, carrying a tray of caudles. Her steps were noiseless, and she came straight to the door, where Elodie stood to receive her. As she went in the door was closed and bolted behind her.

"Now we shall not be disturbed. Tell me what it is."

The woman set down the tray, clasped her hands, and sunk upon her knees.

"It's thankless I am, Miss, to have the word with ye, late as it is!" she sighed, fervently, though in a whisper.

"But what is it?"

With a fearful glance about her, the woman rose, stooped her head close to Elodie's, and whispered very low, but distinctly:

"It's careful ye must be, honey, not to drink the tay they bring ye to-night."

"The tea! Who is to bring me tea?"

"Hush, spake low, honey; it might cost both our lives if she heard us."

"Cost our lives! If you heard us? What do you mean?"

"This, dear, don't drink the tay; not a sup; not a drop."

"Why not?"

"Bekase—it'll be drugged for ye."

"Drugged—my tea! Has any one ever done such a thing?"

"Never yet, honey! sure, I've set it to draw wid me own hands; and I'd never have suspected the like, if me own ears hadn't heard the same."

"What have you heard? When?"

"Only the night before last, when the master came, and went away on the sly."

"Who came? Not Mr. Rashleigh?"

"The woman gave a series of nods, laying her finger on her lip.

"What did he come for? I heard nothing of it."

"No; they wouldn't let you into the say-cret."

"What secret? Tell me, instantly."

"I heard them at their plotting, Miss. I was coming in from the cellar, an' when I heard the whispering, and a man's voice talking to the madame, I jist bided a bit by the big crack in the flure yonder, where I could hear ivery word. Och! the murderin' spalpeen!"

"What did you hear?"

"This, darlin', the old man manes to marry ye to his son."

"He cannot do that!"

"Hist! but he won't go the fair way. He's to put somethin' in the tay to make ye crazy, and not knowin' what ye're about, and to have the praste and groom all ready—bad luck to 'em! and have the ceremony over, and ye in a sound sleep after, and to carry ye off as a bride!"

The girl's quick perception took in the plot at once.

"When was this to be done?" she asked.

"This very night, me darlin'."

Elodie shuddered; a thrill of horror ran through her frame.

"And madame!—she consented to such a foul treachery?"

"Faix, and she did! But she'd not do it wid her own hands! she would have it to say she'd naught to do wid the matter—in case things turned out badly. Millie murder—but it's a deep one she is."

The girl's hands covered her face; but she suppressed the sobs that struggled for outbreak.

"Indeed I do—every inch of it! Couldn't we go to Squire Barber's—it's only three miles—"

"They might; we must take the train. We are safe, once at the station. I have money to take us both to New York."

She pulled out a silken purse, half-filled, and then put it back in her pocket.

"But the madame! She'll raise the hue and cry," suggested the Irishwoman.

"She must know nothing! She would intercept us. We must steal out, Catherine."

"And how shall we get away from her?"

"We can get out the back way, while she is at supper."

"The master will be here before then."

"Then we must lock her in her own room, and escape before she can get out."

There seemed in reality no other way. By dusk the men would be in the house; the feeble strength of Elodie could be overpowered readily; it would be scarcely possible to escape unseen. Madame would be deputed to see that she drank the tea prepared for her. There was not a moment to lose.

The young girl felt her presence of mind rise with the emergency. She tossed to Catherine a hat and shawl she had been accustomed to wear when walking on the veranda, and, gliding from the room, went to the door of Leona's, on the opposite side of the narrow hall.

The room was kept locked by the madame, and when she went in to change her dress, she usually left the key on the outside. It was so, fortunately, on the present occasion. Elodie heard her singing inside, as she was trailing a dress from the closet where it had hung.

Quick as thought she turned the key, and drew it out of the lock. The singing went on, and by that she judged that Leona heard nothing.

She ran back to her own room, snatched a mantle and hood from the wardrobe, and seized the hand of Catherine, who was already equipped. Both sped noiselessly down the stairs, and left the house.

"She may not see us," cried the escaped prisoner, "and the turn in the road will hide us directly."

CHAPTER XIV.

FLIGHT AND PURSUIT.

THE two fugitives took the road leading to the railway station. Elodie clung to Catherine's arm, and was thus enabled to walk very fast. She refused the woman's entreaties that she would stop and rest, when they were out of sight of the house by Saltmarsh.

"No, no, we must hurry on!" she cried. "Madame Leona will soon discover that we are missing, if she has not already; and she will pursue us. What if she does, Catherine! She is stronger than I am!"

"It's meeself that would fight for you, Miss, and to the death!" said the sturdy woman.

"You must do so, Catherine, if she does try to drag me back. I have not a weapon to defend myself. Oh, if there were a farm-house, or a cabin, I would beg help of anybody."

"There is none nearer than Squire Barber's, and the master might come there, and tell his lies, and say you were his son's wife, and a crazy woman, Miss."

"Very true; and they might give me up. The station is nearest. Oh, how I wish it were dark!"

The good woman reassured her by saying they could get at least half way there, before the "madam" could manage to get out of her room.

"She'll spend a quarter of an hour in calling me, ye see; for she'll think directly that I've locked the door unbeknownst, as she told me wance to do, if I found it open when she was away from it."

"Did she? I am very glad of that!"

"Surely; and she'll never suspect any way else! Her room looks on the road, and she knows my quarters are on t'other side. I must laugh to think how she'll yell for me! I've often wondered what she kept so peevish in that room, that she always looked it!"

"Her peevishness, I suppose," answered Elodie, and then remembering that her faithful attendant would not understand the word, she explained it as well as her failing breath would let her.

They had walked very fast over three-fourths of a mile, when the delicate girl's strength began to give way. She drew her breath gaspingly, and clung closer to her companion's arm; Catherine would have lifted and carried her, but she would not permit that, much as she feared being overtaken. The woman flung one arm around her waist, and half-carried her some rods further; but her limbs failed her. With a groan of despair she sunk upon the ground.

They were sheltered by a clump of bushes growing by the roadside. Catherine removed the young lady's hood, to give her fresh air, and softly drew her head to her own shoulder, bidding her rest. Elodie whispered that she would be able to go on in a few minutes. She had not thought of bringing with her any stimulant, in view of her need of a restorative.

The roll of wheels was heard approaching! Elodie looked up, terrified, into her protector's face. It was growing dark so rapidly, she had hopes that any carriage might pass without seeing them; but she did not know.

Catherine answered the look by clasping her more closely.

"Lie still, honey," she whispered. "Make no sound, while I bide listening."

In two or three minutes she released her clasp, and rose to her feet.

The wheels were those of a loaded wagon, and came from a cross-road, just ahead.

Bidding the young lady keep still, Catherine stepped boldly into the road.

In a moment she returned; took up Elodie in her arms, and carried her out to the wagon, which had stopped.

Elodie gave a cry of apprehension.

"Whist, me darlin'! there's room for you, and a nice chance to ride to the station," she whispered.

She had asked the wagoner's hospitality for "a sick lady," going to her friends in New York, and he had consented to displace one of the boxes with which his wagon was loaded, piling it in front, to make room for her.

The young invalid was lifted to the vacant place, and Catherine took the shawl from her own shoulders to make a pillow for her head.

"But where are you going to sit?" asked Elodie.

"I shall just walk, and take hold of the wagon behind," replied the Irishwoman.

This she did, keeping close to her charge, who held one of her strong hands, part of the time, in her own soft clasp. Thus they went to the station, which proved to be fully three miles from the house on the marsh.

As they drew near, the whistle of a coming train was heard, with the rush of its approach.

Elodie started up in affright. But the lights gleaming like eyes in the darkness showed plainly that the train came from the opposite direction to the one leading to the city. The wagoner comforted the supposed

sick passenger by assuring her that the "down train" to the city would not be along for nearly an hour.

"Suppose they should have come by this!" she said, in a faint whisper, to her attendant.

"No danger!" was the response; and presently the stout, strong arms lifted the girl from her perch on the wagon, to carry her into the waiting-room.

Elodie insisted on rewarding the kind wagoner, and did so with a liberal fee, besides her thanks. She objected to being taken to the waiting-room. If by any chance Rashleigh and his party should be on board the up-train, they might come in there.

Catherine assured her there was no chance of that; adding the information that while following the wagon, a few minutes before their arrival, she had distinctly seen the lights of a close carriage, which had passed them, going rapidly in the other direction.

"And what a mercy of Providence it was that you were safe in the wagon, honey!" she said. "They could not see me either, for the long box stickin' out behind."

"Do you think Mr. Rashleigh was in that carriage?" asked Elodie.

"I'm that sure of it that I wouldn't feel safe if he'd seen me!" answered the woman.

"Oh, then, what are we to do? He'll miss me presently, and he will have time to drive back before the train comes. It is not due for forty minutes yet, I heard the porter say!"

For once, Catherine could make no suggestion.

"I dare not stay in the waiting-room, nor on the platform anywhere!" wailed the poor hunted girl. "And I dare not ask protection from the agent. Men always refuse to believe a helpless woman, against a man who will tell any falsehood in claiming her! What shall we do?"

"Bide a minute here, me darlin', Catherine said; and away she flew.

The five minutes or more of her absence were like the interval of hours to the terrified fugitive, who knew there was no safety for her when once her pursuer should have discovered her flight. The distance to the house could be driven over in less than ten minutes, she felt convinced.

"Be 'asy, honey," whispered a comforting voice in her ear. "I've got the wagoner to spake to the baggage-man, and tould him ye were abducted from your friends, and had barely made your escape, with only me to help ye. The baggage-master will have a place for us in his own express-car, and slip ye in unbeknownst. I shall go with you—don't be afraid. But I had to promise a lot of money!"

Elodie uttered an exclamation of grateful joy. If there was not enough in her purse, she said, she would give him the diamond ring she wore upon her forefinger.

The sagacious Catherine had rightly judged as to Leona's conclusions and behavior. When she discovered that her door was locked, she was certain it had been done by the servant, in pursuance of her instructions. She called her loudly, and throwing up the window, shouted till she was hoarse. She called Elodie, and beat desperately at the door.

Then the truth flashed on her brain. She had been duped by the girl. By some means the conspiracy had become known, and the intended victim had fled. What was to be done?

Leona was full of rage. She knew the entire blame would be thrown on her by Rashleigh. Yet it might be possible to overtake the fugitives, if she could pursue them at once. The young girl could not walk far at a rapid pace. She must stop frequently to rest; and as Leona knew the road they would take—invariably the one leading to the station—the pursuer might easily intercept their flight.

It was growing dark fast, however.

With her scissors the captive tried to force the lock of the door; but it had been put on roughly on the other side, and the keyhole resisted her efforts.

She might almost leap from the window to the veranda, there being no roof to it on that side. Quickly as her fingers could work, she knotted a corner of one of the sheets, and tied the other to the bedstead, which she dragged to the window. The sheet was not quite long enough; she was obliged to light a lamp and to go to the other sheet, and to test the strength of this substitute for a rope-ladder. Luckily it was but a few feet she had to descend; and having ascertained beyond a doubt that it would bear her weight, she stepped out upon the window-sill, and drew the bedstead close to it. Grasping the twisted sheet, she tremblingly let herself down, and reached the veranda in safety.

It was now quite dark, and she had to go in to the kitchen for another light, and to explore the house. It took her some time to get the lamp lighted, as the wood fire was out, and the match-box mislaid. After a most vexatious delay, she obtained the light, and ran upstairs.

Elodie, she soon discovered, had gone out; her hood and cloak were missing; and the shawl and hat she usually put on when leaving her room. Catherine must have been the companion of her flight.

Seizing another light shawl, Leona hurried down-stairs, and out in the road. It was so dark she could not discern objects at a short distance, and after going a few yards, she stopped, conscious that her pursuit would be utterly hopeless.

The only thing to be done was to watch for the arrival of Rashleigh, and send him after the runaways.

She paced the veranda for what seemed hours to her impatience, before she saw the lights of the carriage-lamps. It came rapidly down the road, and stopped at the gate.

Rashleigh alighted first, and Leona called to him. The alarm was given in her quick, eager tones.

"Hush!" he whispered, as he left the carriage and came through the gate.

"Mr. Rashleigh! for mercy's sake lose no time! She has escaped! She must be at the station by this time!"

"Who—Elodie?"

"Yes—yes; and she has Catherine with her! I had just stepped into my room, and the door was locked on me! It took me such a time to get out that I had lost sight of them!"

A torrent of profane imprecations, in which the outwitted guardian was not spared, came from the disappointed man.

"How came she to know anything?" he asked, when he had vented his rage.

"How can I tell! She learned nothing from me. Ah!" as a light broke on her perceptions—"I have it! Catherine must have been listening when you spoke to me the other night! She heard your words, and repeated them to the girl."

"I will go back at once!" cried Rashleigh. "I have just time! The others will stay; take care of my son!"

He dashed out of the gate, sprung into the carriage, from which three men had just alighted, and called out to the driver:

"To the nearest station—and double fare if you get me there in time for the down train!"

The carriage had been hired at a station some three miles further down, to throw suspicion off the track. The driver wheeled about, and the rapid rolling of the vehicle could be heard after it had vanished in the darkness.

A man in clerical dress, wearing a waterproof cloak, led into the house a youth of about nineteen, who looked about him wonderingly and smiled at everything he saw. They were followed by the attendant who had brought him from the hospital.

Leona, vexed to the heart, and chafing inwardly, was obliged to show these unwelcome guests into the parlor, to replenish the fire, and to light one in the kitchen for the preparation of their supper.

She had sagacity enough to know that it was not at all likely Rashleigh would return. He would pursue the fugitives to the city, unless he were too late for the train.

It was a bitter humiliation to her to have the strangers thrust on her for the night; but there was no help for it. She must play the maid-of-all-work, for the first and last time. Before breakfast, she determined she would be on her own way to New York.

The driver of the carriage was resolved to earn the double fare promised. The whistle of the coming train broke on their ears just as they reached the station. Rashleigh sprung out, paid the fare, and was barely in time to procure his ticket. He asked if two women, one of them a young girl, had taken tickets.

No; the agent had seen nothing of them.

But a man dressed like a coachman, who stood on the platform, heard the question, and called out:

"All right, boss; I see'd 'em myself. The gal was delicate like, and had to be helped to walk, eh?"

"The same, my good fellow; where are they?"

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A Welcome Announcement!

THE LONG-CALLED FOR ROMANCE AT LAST!

In deference to the almost incessant demand, of new readers and old, for the reproduction of that remarkable romance,

NICK WHIFFLES' PET;

Ned Hazel, the Boy Trapper,

BY CAPT. J. F. C. ADAMS,

we shall give the beautiful story place in our columns—the opening chapters in No. 295.

This splendid tale of the North-west Trapping Grounds excited an enthusiasm rarely enlisted in popular journalism. It doubled the circulation of the SATURDAY JOURNAL, but soon after its publication passed out of print, owing to the most unexpected demand for it, by new readers. Then the trade began to call for it, but, though we earnestly desired to meet the wishes of all, it has never been feasible to reintroduce it to our pages, until the present.

OLD NICK WHIFFLES!

Dear, Quaint, Honest, Brave Old Nick! here comes to the front, and in a story whose interest at times becomes almost breathless, and is always entrancing, the old hunter acts the part of father, friend and protector to one worthy of his love.

The Daring Boy Trapper,

Ned Hazel, who, coming from most honorable blood, yet finds himself, in youth, a waif in the far-off Saskatchewan country, in whose lovely wilds Old Whiffles spent the last years of his adventurous and singular life. The mystery of the boy's parentage and history—the nobleness of his nature and the heroism of his acts—his love for queer old Nick and the old hunter's deep love for the boy—all are features which make the story

"Too Enticing for Anything."

as a noted journalist said upon its first appearance. It is radiant with humor and fun; it is touching in its affections; it is full of a real hunter's interest in its incidents of trapping and hunting; it is pervaded by the wilder interest of danger and fierce adventure with the dreaded Blackfeet, and the animosity of the Hudson Bay Fur Company's Brigades—rendering it, altogether,

The Most Captivating Story EVER GIVEN TO THE PUBLIC In Any Popular Paper.

Sunshine Papers.

Neighborliness.

"At auction! La! sakes, you don't say so, Sary Ann! The Highflier's going to sell out at auction! Well, well, if it don't beat all! Though you know I allers told you, Sary Ann, it was a long lane that had no turnin', and they'd come to the end of their tether afore long, with their stuck-up notions, and fine dresses, and keeping of a boss and kerriage just to ride out with. And I ain't an idee but they're a-goin' to clear out because they're head over heels in debt. That's what such spendthrifts gin'rally come to."

"Mrs. Highflier, did her own work? Well, what if she did, I'd like to know, Sary Ann! Ain't I allers done my own work? And what's more, I never found time besides to fly around the country every day, in fine gowns, and keep a house full of company, and how she ever did it is more'n I can tell. But then 'tain't no ways likely but she was a dreadful, careless, shiftless housekeeper."

"Her rooms always looked pretty? Well they might, and she wastin' her husband's money on books and picturs. I wonder if they think their picturs 'll bring much! La! sakes, just as if people could afford to pay for picturs! Well, well, I must run over and see if Mrs. Bayler's goin' to the auction."

Rap! rap! rap! sounds the auctioneer's hammer in the Highflier's cottage; and buzz, buzz, buzz, sound the voices of dozens of eager buyers.

"Jest look at them napkins, Mis' Bayler. Regular damask! Ain't it enough to make one shudder at such extravagance! and Sary Ann says Mis' Highflier used 'em every day for her own family; and then the little ones for tea. And such towels! I shall bid for them, though I don't mean to go high; most likely they cost nigh a dollar apiece; crash is plenty good enough for our folks; and I keep two white ones for the spare room, though they're beginnin' to wear a leetle."

"Going! going! gone! these two fine chromos, for ten dollars, to Squire Hill," announced the auctioneer; and the neighbors shake their heads, and say Mis' Highflier ought to be here and see how much other people think of her fine pictures, and wonder if it would not have mortified her to have heard them going for ten dollars; and the squire glows over his bargain—not that he cares much for the pictures, only he got them so cheap—and the whole community remain in happy ignorance that the two pictures cost just half what they were sold for at the auction. Then the people inspect the china, and say how shiftless it was of Mrs. Highflier to use it common, and frown at her wine-glasses; but in trying to outbid each other for possession of them, give a price that would have brought joy to the hearts of

tradesmen. They search the house for dirt, and say spiteful things over the nice bedding, and turn over the tinware, wondering if it was always kept as clean. They poke among the jars of preserves, and think the sitting-room was dreadfully fixed up, and wonder what the Highflier wanted of such fancy ottomans, and how they could afford so many stores. The men inspect the outer arrangements, and indulge in doubts concerning the soundness of the horse, the strength of the carriage, the working order of the feed cutter, and affect to despise such trumpery as lawn-mower and rose-sprinklers.

The auctioneer talks, and raps, and raps, and talks, and makes good bargains, and earns a liberal percentage, and returns fair profits to the pockets of the Highfliers.

And Sary Ann is informed at night:

"Well, it beats anything I ever saw, the new-dangled notions that was in that house. A flour-sifter that worked with a crank, things to core apples, and seed raisins, and squeeze lemons, and cook eggs right on the table, and the most amazing egg-beaters! And red napkins, and baskets for hair-pins on the bureau, and the fanciest flixin' for flowers, and scraps, and paper, and matches, and for scentin' rooms!"

"She made 'em all herself? Well, who said she didn't, Sary Ann, but 'pears to me 'twas an awful waste of time for which she'll have to account, some day. Think of the rag-carpet she might 'a' been a sewin'!"

"They're goin' to board in the city? Well, they'll come to want yet, I ain't a doubt!"

"Mr. Groves says they don't owe no one a cent? Perhaps Mr. Groves don't know every thing; but, what if they don't, Sary Ann! most likely they starved themselves to keep up a show; and I shouldn't wonder if she hadn't hardly a thing to her back except her fine dresses. Pity she hadn't sold her clothes at auction, so we could have found out. Such people oughter come to judgment, it's my opinion!"

A PARSON'S DAUGHTER.

"Chat.—Eve Lawless gives, in this number, some good hints in regard to home amusements. Remembering that home is just what we make it, each member of the household ought to be willing to add his or her share to the amusement fund, and thus contribute to make their own particular home the pleasantest of all."

Nothing contributes more to the evening's pleasures than the preparation and delivery of good dialogues or little dramas, arranged for parlor presentation. The household which can muster three or four children has all the "actors" necessary. With the help and advice of their elders, the young folks will produce their own dramas, tableaux, acting exercises, etc., with most delightful effect, and at the same time benefit the participants amazingly in elocution, grace of bodily motion and dramatic expression. Parents ought to be only too willing to encourage their children in this class of entertainments, for it is a school in itself.

In the new volume (No. 16) of the charming "Dime Dialogues" series, published by Beadle and Adams, the young folks will find some very amusing and *catching* pieces, capably adapted for evening home entertainments or amateur exhibitions, prepared expressly for ready production in any ordinary house or school-room.

The trouble with almost all the parlor and school-drama books is the introduction of scenes, situations, costumes, etc., which render the reproduction of the dramas impracticable, to a serious degree; hence many teachers prefer to write their own pieces for exhibition, thus to overcome the difficulties of which the published dramas take no note. The "Dime Dialogues," now numbering sixteen volumes, (12mo.; 100 pages each), have been an enormous success, first from their sprightly nature, and second because they anticipate and provide for the needs and necessities of every school or home stage.

We can commend these exceedingly cheap and unexceptionably good books to our homes and schools as just the aid they want in providing their young folks with the necessary material for their public and private entertainments.

OUR Mr. David Adams, just home from his ten weeks' run in the Old World, made his passages, both going and coming, in the magnificent steamer City of Berlin. The home run was accomplished in the extraordinary time of seven days eighteen hours and two minutes—thus beating, by several hours, the quickest passage heretofore made by any steamer. The City of Berlin is literally an ocean monster, being five hundred and twenty feet in deck length! That so large a vessel should make such wonderful speed is certainly a great triumph in engineering and naval architecture.

In the out passage, among the episodes of the voyage, was a raffle, for the benefit of a poor sailor, of a perfect *fac-simile* model of the great steamer, made by the sailor—"true to the life," even to black ropes and hawse-locks. This miniature, falling to Mr. A's number, now ornaments our office, and makes a somewhat unique feature of the "sanctum" of the SATURDAY JOURNAL.

THE almost constant demand for the "good-looking face" of Buffalo Bill will be answered in a manner to please all. With a future issue of the SATURDAY JOURNAL we shall present every reader with a colored portrait of Mr. Cody, printed on heavy paper for framing—an announcement which will be received with great pleasure by his host of friends.

HOME ENJOYMENTS.

HOME can be made one of the most enjoyable places on earth if people were only willing to make it so. Some individuals imagine that amusements, to be good, must necessarily be costly. That's a very erroneous idea. What can be pleasanter than having the group assembled in the parlor while some one of the family circle reads aloud? It always seems selfish not to read aloud when one can entertain a whole roomful, with no more trouble than in silent reading. The newspaper or book can be enjoyed by so many at one time that it is fulfilling a double duty. You may say there are matters in the book and paper that are not fit to be read aloud, and I may be just enough of a heathen to tell you that such matters are not fit to be read to oneself, and that such books and papers should not be read at all, and, what is more, they should not be printed. But there are enough pure and good publications to be had, both in prose and verse—printed words that teach us courage, perseverance, self-reliance, and a great many more virtues which will have a good effect upon a household; the reader will feel that he is not only enjoying himself, but is causing enjoyment for others and doing good to one and all at the same time. This reading aloud at home keeps the family group together; it prevents

the members from straying to less pure amusements; it causes a feeling of love and friendship to pervade the hearts of the household; it interests and instructs them; the hours do not seem so long nor the time so dreary; it cheers, enlivens and instructs. When one reader grows tired, let another take up the pleasant task and let the former reader become a hearer.

You can have music, too, at no expense, if you wish. We cannot all have parlor grand pianos, nor revel in cabinet organs, but we can let our voice take the place of those useful instruments, for we can sing. How many a care has been lightened, how many a burden made less hard to bear, by having a real, downright good sing!

There's a great deal of music in the voices of children, so do not debar the youngsters from having a hearty laugh, even though it chances to be a somewhat noisy one. It isn't every day the laughter of a child reaches us, and childhood lasts such a seemingly little while that it is a pity to crush out the spirits that are so harmless. How happy a home is where there are merry children's faces, careless children's laughter, and how cruel it seems in some people who would put all this innocent amusement out of sight, who put far away from them some of the most beautiful and innocent amusements of home life! I shouldn't care for a home from which all life and light were excluded, and there are many others who hold the same opinion.

Don't sit like a roomful of mummies when at home, with gloomy visages and silent tongues, as though your tongues were too precious to be wasted by speech. Let conversation serve as a home amusement, and let each one see which can relate the most amusing anecdote or tell the most interesting story. Don't be afraid to give your opinions on various topics. Don't be timid in asking questions concerning matters that you are ignorant of, and be good-natured enough to inform others about matters that are foreign to them. If parents and children were more sociable with each other, and did not act as though a barrier were placed between them, far happier would many a home be. Where the fault lies that there is such a width of confidence between parents and children, it is hard to tell; there may be faults on both sides, as there generally is in all cases. It wouldn't be bad to make a change for the better. Social conversation is, indeed, a pure and healthful amusement, and one from which great benefits may be derived.

Stay more at home, good friends, and make it more cheerful. Let your kindest thoughts and dearest affections center in your home, and, by-and-by, you will grow so fond of it you will dislike to leave it. Plan new pleasures and amusements for the household, and let one and all find their chief enjoyments at home.

EVE LAWLESS.

Foolscap Papers.

A Few Facts Concerning the Dun.

Notes from a note-book.

THE Dun is a human being of the genus man—though we are hardly likely to place him in this class—with features rather hard, disguised in a sort of thin smile, which you can see through at once, and which evaporates as soon as you tell him "some time next week."

This photograph may be superfluous, since you all know of his appearance of satisfaction. He delights to "just be passing and thought he would drop in and see you" when you are least expecting him, and then his face is as welcome as your mother-in-law's.

He has no seasons; all seasons are his own.

The Dun comes after his due, and when he does come what can you do?

I have often remarked how pleasantly you meet him on the street. He shakes hands with you with moneyed cordiality; every shake seems to be endeavoring to jerk a dollar-bill from you. He inquires after your health and brings up with a bang about a big bill he has to meet to-day, and if, and if—well, if you had never been born you think you would be the happiest man in town, without any doubt.

He is about the first man you meet; if don't happen so—it is fate. Fate and he seem to be boon companions.

It is impossible to avoid him in a crowd; every time you shift your place he is always a little bit closer to you. The last move you make there he is with "glad to see you."

Your happiness is not entirely unbounded.

You have seen the time when you were more overjoyed.

He always seems to hold off until you have no money. That's just your luck.

He is a national stumbling-block upon our sidewalks, and you are always sure to strike him.

He is painfully punctual when you set a future hour to see him, and a little less thoughtfulness on his part would be more agreeable.

You never have to hang around and wait and worry while he is served out to them in the "sample-rooms" they would welcome any substitute short of sulphuric acid.

The population of Trebigne, the principal town of the Herzegovina, is about three thousand, and a wretched sort of life they lead. There are no good roads in the country, and there is no trade; so that whether the Turk suppresses the "revolt," that is now making such a sensation, or Serbia and Herzegovina go in for a war of independence, does not matter to European civilization. A few live Yankees there would make something out of what really is a very beautiful country.

Now, young man, listen, while we tell you how to pop the question. Get your June-bug well cornered where no one can overhear you, and poke this conundrum at her: "When will there be only twenty-five letters in the alphabet?" Answer—"When you and I are made one." After that it is plain sailing, until "pa" has to be consulted and then conundrums won't answer. He'll come right down to hard-pan with amazing cruelty.

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—Senior P. C. Armijo, the mutton millionaire of New Mexico, sold over 200,000 pounds of wool last year. With his father and a business partner he owns nearly 3,000,000 head of sheep, scattered over a range of country more than three hundred miles square. He has had two losses by Indian raids, one of 35,000 head and the other of 15,000, "but," he says, "I hardly missed them."

It is in the same region that the children of a household are not counted. A dozen more or less is never noticed.

—The Dun doesn't improve on acquaintance; the more you are acquainted with him the less you like each other.

But, here comes a Dun, so I am done.

WASHINGTON WHITEHORN.

Topics of the Time.

DAME FASHION, with more consideration than usual, orders that "combination suits" shall continue in vogue this coming winter. These are times best suited to economy, and to give the girls a chance to use the bits and ends of one kind of material and another lying about, is eminently right and proper. It is much more conducive to good mental and bodily health just now to use old trumpery than to buy new dress goods. Merchants and dress-makers may not like this advice but papas will. Merchants and dress-makers have had a long and profitable reign, and they can now whittle their finger-nails, awhile—perhaps!

—This is the season of the year when it is too late to wear nankeen trousers, and too early to put up the stove; when the poet of the period points triumphantly to the glory of the scene; and when man, standing beneath the illimitable expanse of heaven, and covered with goose-pimples, drinks in the magnificence of autumn. Or der up the saw-horse and go for the pine wood!

—An English traveler, Mr. Hartshorne, gave the British Association the other day an account of the Weddas, a wild tribe which lives in the interior of Ceylon. These Weddas are about five feet high, live on water and root-monkeys, and are, he reports, incapable of laughter. That may be because they are incapable of paying for a "smile" and "no trust" is the law. Our benevolent societies should look into the matter and supply the little savages with food for laughter—gloves for instance.

—James Lick, the California millionaire-philanthropist, is described as thin-visaged, sharp-angled in forehead and chin and nose, with a shock of matted and tangled black hair, slightly sprinkled with gray, covering his head nearly down to his eyes. His eyes are a cold, pale blue, fish-gray, and glassy, and a long, straggling, under-beard covers his chin. Not a very prepossessing physiognomy, truly. We don't wonder, however, seeing what a name he has had to carry through life.

—Apprope to the big stealing going on, in high places, is this illustration, with a moral: A Tenth-warder, (in Detroit, of course), somewhat under the influence of Detroit chloroform, approached an acquaintance the other day and remarked: "See here, Bill, they say you called me a sheep-thief!" "Yes, I did," "Well, you've got to apologize or I'll lick you!" "I'll be happy to apologize. I called you a sheep-thief—but I mis-spoke myself—I meant to say that you had been in jail for stealing a horse!" "That's manly," said the Tenth-warder. "Get 'em take a drink. I knew you didn't think I'd pick up anything smaller'n a horse." A horse may seem a big thing for Detroit, but anything under ten thousand dollars is a sheep steal in *respectable* circles, down-east.

—We recorded the fact, a few days ago, that woman suffrage in Wyoming was a success—that is, it didn't make men any worse or women any better, but such items as the following make us question if the success is not a dangerous precedent: A Wyoming jury—the item states—composed of seven men and five women were shut up for two days and two nights and yet they couldn't agree. It is said that if they had remained out for seventeen years there would have been no verdict, as the five women talked the seven men deaf the first six hours. Which may be, but the California jury, which was in the court, now that woman has a legal right to participate in jury duty, she means to show what she can effect, in the shortest possible time.

—The direct Atlantic cable is now in working order. As a first effect of the competition it breeds, it is said to have caused a great deal of the bed of the Atlantic ocean didn't belong to him exclusively, and messages that until lately cost a small fortune to dispatch are now eagerly sought for at twenty-five cents a word, address included. But we mustn't be too enthusiastic over the matter, for the rivals may coalesce and then up go the rates again! The combination of the several great coal companies in Pennsylvania shows what power there is in might. Atlantic cables will make a big ring when they ring in on rates.

—A German chemist says he has made a compound, which in the concentrated form of a powder, possesses all the qualities of lager beer. One ounce of it put into a gallon of water will produce a beverage that cannot be distinguished from ordinary beer. If beer-guzzlers only realized what horrible stuff was served out to them in the "sample-rooms" they would welcome any substitute short of sulphuric acid.

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Readers and Contributors.

TO CORRESPONDENTS AND AUTHORS.—No MSS. received that are not fully prepaid in postage.—No MSS. preserved for future orders.—Unusable MSS. promptly returned only where stamps accompany the inclosures, for such return.—No correspondence or notice is permissible in a package marked as "Book MS."—MSS. which are imperfect are not used or wanted. In all cases our choice rests first upon merit or fitness; second, upon excellence of MS. as "copy"; third, length. Of two MSS. of equal merit we always prefer the shorter.—Never write on both sides of a sheet.—The Commercial Note size paper as most convenient to editor and compositor, tearing off each page as it is written, and carefully giving it the full or page number.—A rejection by no means implies a want of merit. Many MSS. unsuitable to us are all worthy of all. All experienced and popular writers will find us ever ready to give their offerings early attention.—Correspondents must look to this column for all information in regard to contributions. We can not write letters except in special cases.

Declined: "Recompense;" "The Two-forked Road;" "The Scott-Uda Ladder Tragedy;" "No!" "The Fatal Adventure;" "The Gipsy's Prophecy;" "The Wronged Heiress;" (short story); "Spice;" "Joe Howard's Burglar;" "A Spice of Adventure."

Accepted: "The Touch of Hands" (September); "A New Friend;" "Calling by Proxy;" "The Specter of the Walk;" "Lucy Little's Letter;" "Big Dan's Victory."

The serials, "Wronged Heiress," "Leon's Secret," and "The Father's Will," we have written to authors, declining.

Authors who try to crowd the matter proper for two pages upon one page are informed that we lay aside such contributions for the choreography to grow up to a readable state.

MAJOR TRAFF. A good sword will cost you \$30 in a plain scabbard.

OMLETTE. Prof. Blot, the French cook, is dead. He did not succeed in establishing a cheap eating-house.

MAGIE E. There are already a perfect surfeit of professional singers. Don't aim at the stage.

W. L. C. Your "poem" is decidedly unpoetic. Send it to the N. Y. Sun as an item in rhyme.

THE BLUEBIRD. "Orange No. 1," not now in print. It was written by Albert V. Aiken.

L. A. B. The author named is not, we believe, writing for the papers. A Boston house publishes his books.

A. H. S. The *Buzzer* you refer to is published in Chicago; Burton & Co., Editors and Publishers; price, 50 cents per year.

B. B. A bad breath almost unfailingly proceeds from decayed or unclean teeth, or from a disordered stomach. Correct the cause and the trouble will pass away.

R. W. R. Oil Codies is—Oil Codies. Buffalo Bill is Wm. F. Cody. His "Hon." title was won as member of Nebraska Legislature. The other author named is not now writing, we believe, for any paper. Capt. Mayne Reid is now living in London.

EX-CLERK. The reports of A. F. Stewart's mismanagement of his clerks are absurd. He employs only a superior class of men, who command a good price for their services and demand moderate treatment. Such men find no fault with the "merchant prince." Your informant was "docked" for some good reason, we dare say.

DIAN, JR. The U. S. Government has no military school but that at West Point. The several schools announced as "fitting boys for West Point" are not doing so by any authority. Any school "fits boys for West Point" which trains them in the branches prescribed for admission. No military knowledge whatever is required for admission.

MISS M. A. B. Warts certainly are a blemish to a lady's hand. The ordinary remedy is to rub the silver (lunar caustic). A piece prepared in a quill may be obtained at any drug-store. Rub the warts with a corn-file, or scrape the top with a pen-knife (not cutting), and touch with the caustic at night and morning. The black stain will wear off, and the wart disappear with a few applications. Strong aromatic vinegar, applied with the warts, will produce the desired result, without staining the skin, but the effect is not so rapid.

DEAR NO. 3. The Wall street rate for nine per cent interest is: Multiply whole amount by number of days, separate right hand figure and divide by four; for ten per cent, multiply by number of days and divide by five.

MRS. C. S. D. The diamond brooch presented to Minnie Sherman, by the Khedive of Egypt, contains, it is said, about seven hundred and seventy brilliant of all sizes, from a seven or eight carat stone to some as small as one-twelfth of a carat. The aggregate weight of the diamonds is at least 300 carats; but the quality is poor. The stone is a Bywater—a quality of diamonds technically described as being of "off-color," and they are well paid for at \$100 per carat, cost of setting and all included—making its value about thirty thousand dollars—truly a princely "token of admiration."

JOHN B. J. asks: "How can I obtain an introduction to a lady, with whose appearance I am very much pleased, and are several of my friends in the line?" We answer: You should ask a mutual friend for the introduction you wish.—Scarlet neckties are still fashionable, and you must wear one when you go to be presented to the lady in question.

OPERATOR, Rochester. We must refer you to the Wall street reports for the information you ask. As to the great "Consolidated Virginia" mine, an amazing success—its big bonanza turning out a stream of ore valued at \$2,000 per hour! The stock is quoted at \$25 per share, and no one would buy it. We advise you most earnestly to let mining stocks alone. They are the most fatal of all stocks to operate in.

MISS AGNES O. The favorite coiffure in New York this season has a handsomely braided coil, worn on the crown of the head, with three lace-like curls that hang below, over the back of the neck. The front hair is crimped, and falls loosely over the forehead. The Spanish comb is very popular, for the reason that it is suitable for the simple coil, and for the more elaborate ones. The comb is of a low, broad shape are now the most fashionable.

RAVEN ADMIRER. The article you have read extracts from was published in the last number of *Scrubber's Monthly*. You was "nipped" a madman than any other poet. His vagaries were so methodical, indeed, that he was a kind of rhyme constructor. That he was a poet at all, in the best sense of the word, is a wonder. He had a wonderfully keen apprehension of the powers of expression, and therein lies the sole secret of his success. He was a mad poet, but did not write a line when on his snows.

SAPPHO, Utica. We cannot recommend any cosmetic of the kind you describe. The peculiar complexion which you regret is caused by want of fresh air and exercise, or the excessive use of very rich food. Try a plain diet, and a long walk for six months, and we think you will not need or desire any cosmetic. All the preparations in use to clear the complexion are of doubtful value. It is better to let nature do its work, and to avoid all powders and in making the skin harsh and dry. There are hundreds of washes we can send you if you insist upon trying them, but we recommend none.

MRS. C. D. D. Many of the foreign goods you buy for all wool and all silk are mixed with cotton, so they will wear as almost as much as the real goods. To cause the cotton to resemble wool, it is scratched, and the surface raised by a particular process. If you will draw a thread or two out, and burn them in the flame of a taper, if the material be cotton, it will consume to a light, impalpable white ash, cotton being a vegetable fiber; but if, on the contrary, it is wool, and therefore an animal fiber, it will curl and curl in the flame, and show a black ash, accompanied with a smell, which will speak as to its origin.

A. T. Lake Mahopac, writes: "Suppose a young lady makes an engagement with a gentleman, to take place during some portion of a certain day as determined by circumstances. Circumstances make the evening the time for the keeping of the promise. The lady tries to evade it, and finally, at the last minute, declines to keep it. By so doing she wounds and places in a most embarrassing position the gentleman. Her reasons for so doing are compliance with the wishes of another gentleman, and the fact that she would place him, also, in a most embarrassing position. In this complication of matters who is most at fault? What was the honorable and polite course for the young lady? Ought she to have kept her promise at all hazards?

ROSY.

BY JOHNNIE DARR.

We sung "neath the flowers like birds at play—
My fair little Rosy and I.
We wandered together the livelong day,
And cared not how time went by;
Ah, who can tell how I loved her then,
But I never shall see my Rosy again!

We met in the village, of course by chance,
Or, perhaps in the quiet grove,
Or amidst the whirl of the country dance
When I was her only love;
Ah, words cannot tell how I loved her then,
But I never shall see my Rosy again!

One sweet June night, by the river side,
I asked her my future to bless,
And how happy I'd be if she were my bride!
And fair Rosy whispered "Yes!"
So I told her how deeply I loved her then;
But I never shall see my Rosy again!

For the tempter came, in a fatal hour,
And a story strange did tell;
Till poor little Rosy fell;
But I love her now as I loved her then,
Though I never shall see my Rosy again!

In the old churchyard, 'neath the maple trees,
Where we passed such happy hours,
Is a little grave, where the summer breeze
Plays amid the flowers.
Poor Rosy lies there, now free from pain,
But I never shall see my darling again!

The Diamond Cross.

BY MARY REED CROWELL.

MISS ANNIE MAXWELL sat very upright in her straight-backed chair, looking very grand and imposing in her stiff black silk dress and elegant gold jewelry—a pompous, aristocratic old lady, who wore her seventy years with a grim pride not altogether ungraceful.

A wealthy, self-important old lady, who had never married because she did not believe but what it was simply her money the men were after; who lived in grand style, with the same corps of servants for twenty-five years; who had, in a moment of compassionate pity, taken such a violent fancy for Egeria Lane's sweet, sad face, that she had offered her a home in exchange for the girl's delightful companionship and dainty, ladylike services; and who, over and above all things, everything, worshipped and adored her handsome nephew, Earl Bernard, who made periodical visits at Maxwell Place, particularly since Miss Lane had been a member of the household.

He was one of those visits now; and he and Egeria and Miss Maxwell were all together in the elegant drawing-room, awaiting the butler's summons to dinner; Leal leaning against the delicate Ionic column that supported the lace drapery of one of the bay-windows, looking across the room at Egeria's pretty, drooping head, as the girl toyed with some foamy white zephyr work; looking at the fair, graceful hands, the beautiful golden-brown hair, and thinking how dearly he loved her, and wondering what his fate would be, when he put it for Egeria to decide.

Miss Maxwell occupied her usual chair—the straight, tall carved back Gothic, over the dark-bronze satin cushion of which her silken skirt spread a gloomy shade. Her face was expressive of irritation and mystery, and as she spoke Leal thought he had seldom heard greater fretfulness in her tones.

"It's very strange, to say the least of it. You'll admit that, Leal, I suppose, if you do insist upon it that the loss of a ruby ring will not hurt me."

Leal laughed—and you saw how perfectly handsome he was.

"I certainly think the disappearance of your ring hardly sufficient cause to warrant the uneasiness you feel, auntie. As to the mystery—where there are so many servants—"

The old lady interrupted him with a cry of horror.

"The servants! I'd as soon mistrust you, Leal Bernard, as one of my faithful, honest servants!"

Leal smiled, and sauntered over toward Egeria.

"I suppose my honesty is unimpeachable, auntie! How about you, Miss Lane?"

Egeria raised her face—just such a tenderly grave, earnest-eyed face as would attract any one.

"I think Miss Maxwell will find her ring. I am under the impression that it has simply been mislaid."

"Mislaid!" and the old lady mimicked the word contemptuously. "Perhaps you think, Egeria, I am too old and childish to take care of my things? If that is the case, you'd better carry the key of my jewel-casket."

The girl flushed to her very eyes—clear, lovely blue eyes, that were apt to turn to a liquid black when she was in deep earnest.

"Oh, no, you know I did not mean that. Only we are all liable to carelessness."

"Except myself," added Miss Maxwell, caustically. "But, for the future, to guard against loss, I shall insist upon your seeing me replace my ornaments in their safe, every night. You hear, Egeria?"

Then, the big, liveried butler, in his solemn, confidential way, flung open the door, and announced dinner.

She made a wondrously sweet, restful picture, all unconscious of her loveliness, as she sat among the cool white linen drapery of the vine-wreathed window, with one fair arm supporting her proud, graceful little head, and the other turning the leaves of her freshly-cut book.

Leal Bernard stood just within the threshold of the room, looking at her; his eyes misty with the one swelling passion at his heart, his very breathing hushed lest he should mar the sacred quiet and beauty of the scene.

Just without, the low, sleepy music that is abroad in the air of a warm summer afternoon—bees humming, locusts and insects adding their shrill choruses; crickets chirping and birds rustling in their leafy coverts.

Without, warm wealth of sunshine; within, the luxurious wealth of Egeria's sunny hair. Without, blue, fathomless, cloudless skies; within, Egeria's eyes that Leal had so often seen hide their opaline clearness in sweet confusion from his ardent glances. Without, all the world, and yet nothing; within, all things, if only Egeria might be his very own.

His sudden, eager steps aroused her instantly; she looked up, half-startled; then, seeing who it was, flushed the sweet tint of an ocean-bloom, as she laid aside the book.

"I have not disturbed you, I hope? I did not know you were here until I saw you; and, really, the house is dull as a tomb."

He flung himself on a low divan beside her. "I always enjoy these drowsy, warm afternoons; when Miss Maxwell is asleep I generally read. Have you ever read this?"

He glanced at the title, then at her.

"Passion-flowers? Yes—what do you think of Illian?"

She blushed just a trifle—his eyes were not keeping his secret very well.

"Illian! oh, I think she was cruel, knowing her lover loved her so. I think her conduct a little unnatural."

Leal raised himself on an elbow—so handsome, so graceful.

"I think it was outrageous. No true woman would deny her love to the man who asked it, if she had any love for him—would she?—simply because a slanderous tongue stood in the way?"

Egeria laughed as she looked at him.

"How can I tell, since I was never so circumstanced?"

"But you can tell something else, Egeria! you can tell me if you love me! My darling, I love you—oh! so dearly, Egeria! darling!"

She had sprung to her feet in amazement. He reached up and took her hand, drawing her down beside him.

"Answer me, sweet. You will promise to be my own—"

A sudden, violent ringing of a bell interrupted his fateful voice; and, thankful for a moment's reprieve, Egeria darted away—blushing, smiling, happy.

"Miss Maxwell never likes to be kept a moment. I'll be back soon—Leal!"

She added his name almost under her breath, as if to console him for her absence; then, hastened up the grand staircase, with heart all athrob and eyes all alight.

"Miss Maxwell—you rung. I thought you were asleep."

The old lady, with pale cheeks and glistening eyes, pointed her trembling finger to a chair. "Sit down, Egeria Lane, and answer me one question. Where is my diamond cross?"

Egeria met the cold, scornful eyes that were piercing her own so pitilessly; a swift rush of pallor crossed her face, where only the instant before the rosy lights of new-born love had gleamed.

"Your diamond cross? You should not ask me, Miss Maxwell. Has it also disappeared?"

"Has it also disappeared? You have the grace to ask me that when you know, as well as I, that it has gone; and better than I, or any one else, where it is gone."

There was no mistaking the meaning of Miss Maxwell's language; and Egeria rose suddenly from her seat, a low, horrified gasp on her lips, her eyes fairly scintillating with indignation.

"You never mean to insinuate that I have taken it—that I am a thief?"

Miss Maxwell sneered. "I never insinuate. You know, and I, that my hands removed it from my ribbon last night; that it was placed in the casket; and that no one, besides you and I, has been in that room since. Of course I haven't taken it, and it is gone—where my ruby ring and my pearl string are, I suppose. You can draw your own inference."

Egeria listened like one in some horrid dream, to the cold, sarcastic words—such words, and after those other blessed ones, yet warm in her ears.

Then, with the thought of Leal, even more than herself, a deathly horror came over her. "Miss Maxwell, unsay those dreadful words! You must know I never dreamed of such an awful thing—I a thief! My God! how can you—how dare you insult me so?"

She was raging now in the mad passion of this unjust accusation; but Miss Maxwell never raised a finger to stop the torrent.

"Mind you, Egeria Lane, I will forgive you if you will only tell me where to find my jewels. I will send you home, but I will forgive—"

Egeria raised her hand majestically. "Don't talk of forgiving me, who never injured you in word, or thought, or deed! don't speak of sending me home, when I would not remain under this roof another hour to save my life."

She went out of the room with slow, weary steps—who had almost danced for joy as she entered it; her face fairly drawn with the pain and the shame of that last five minutes. Down into the library, where she had promised Leal to come!

He sprang up, smiling in his impatience, as she entered.

"My little dear—Egeria, for God's sake, what's the matter?"

She managed to control her voice sufficiently to speak.

"You asked me if a true woman would deny her love to the man she had given it to, simply because a slanderous tongue intervened. And I have brought you my answer—she would! she does!"

Leal frowned inquiringly upon her.

"Egeria—this is a mystery I cannot solve, that I cannot—"

Miss Maxwell's high, shrill voice screamed spitefully down the staircase.

"But I can! Egeria Lane is a thief, and she walks out of my house this hour, or I'll arrest her for stealing my jewelry!"

Leal's face whitened with passion.

"You see," Egeria said, wistfully. "Never mind me, only help her find who really has taken it. I'm going home, Mr. Bernard, where they'll believe me, at least. No—don't please don't!"

He would have caught her in his arms, but her quiet dignity repulsed him.

"As you will, to-day, my love. Another time—"

She smiled ever so faintly, and then made preparations for instant departure, with her heart almost broken under the sudden, pitiful burden.

"Leal!"

Mr. Bernard looked sternly up from the portmanteau he was packing, at the sound of the uncertain, quivering voice that called his name.

"If you only would stay until to-morrow, Leal! I declare I'm that nervous since—since nobody has slept in the little ante-room off mine, that I can't bear to have you go before the new companion comes."

Leal went on quietly folding a lavender silk scarf.

"I am very sorry to inconvenience you, aunt Annie, but if you knew what a trial it has been to me to remain so long as I have under the roof from which Egeria has been so ruthlessly driven, you would hardly ask me to stay."

"It's only for just one night, Leal. If you only would sleep on the sofa in Egeria's room, next to mine, just to-night. I know something will happen; I feel it all over me."

Leal looked up in her anxious, pallid face.

"Very well, to oblige you, to-night only. But I will not be parted from Egeria another day for all the money at Maxwell Place."

So, that night saw Leal ensconced on the little blue sofa in Egeria's room, whose countless little knick-nacks made constant reminder of the girl he loved, who had gone forth under such a heavy shadow.

How he loved her—his own, abused darling, who was as pure, as true, as perfect as an angel! and how he almost despised aunt Annie, of whose regrets he knew nothing.

His strangely confused dreams were broken

by the knowledge, felt rather than seen, of a person in his room. He opened his eyes, to see a tall, ghostly figure, with meaningless stare, and slow, deliberate tread, advancing toward him, its right hand closely clasped as if upon some treasure. A moment of surprise—then he recognized Miss Maxwell, sans teeth and wig, and arrayed in her long, white night-dress. Instantly the whole truth flashed over him, like a revelation, and in a transport of satisfaction at this providential opportunity given him of forever clearing Egeria Lane's character, Leal watched and waited for his golden moment.

Miss Maxwell went straight to the very lounge on which he was lying, and, her wide-open, sightless eyes, staring straight ahead, she stooped to her knees, and thrust her hand into what seemed to Leal to be a hole amid the stuffing on the under side.

Then, with her hand still in its hiding-place, Leal, springing up, caught her arm, and shouted in her ear:

"Aunt Annie! aunt Annie! wake up—just see what you are up to!"

With a shrill scream of terror she looked rationally at him.

"Marvelous! Heavens, what is the matter? where in the world am I? Oh, Leal, is it a burglar?"

He could not help laughing at her surprise and alarm.

"Yes, a burglar, auntie; hold your hand still a minute. Did you know I had a relative who walks in her sleep? Hold on!—there, that'll do. See here! and here! and here!"

He drew from the hole among the stuffing of the lounge a handful of articles, among which sparkled the diamond cross, the magnificent ring of big, glaring rubies. There were ribbons, lace, money—dozens of little things no one would have missed.

Leal laid them one by one on the lounge.

"So you see whether Egeria is the thief or not, aunt Annie. You put them all there yourself, in your sleep, and then—accuse my darling of stealing them! What shall you do about it?"

His voice was stern, yet it had an undertone of complete content; and he smiled as aunt Annie looked, bewildered, at the promiscuous pile on the lounge.

A minute of silence, while pride, shame, regret and honor battled. Then, with actual tears in her faded eyes, and her withered lips all a-tremble, she reached out her hands to Leal.

"Go to her to-morrow, and tell her I am an old fool, and ask her, if I insist on her marrying you at once, from Maxwell Place, and give her a splendid wedding, and leave every cent I've got in the world to you two, if she'll forgive me."

And, since there was a grand wedding three months afterward, and since Mr. and Mrs. Bernard call their baby boy Maxwell, it is to be inferred that the little romance of the diamond cross has been forgotten.

Erminie:

OR,

THE GIPSY QUEEN'S VOW.

BY MRS. MAY AGNES FLEMING,

AUTHOR OF "THE DARK SECRET," "AN AWFUL MYSTERY," "VICTORIA," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XI.

LITTLE ERMINIE.

"Sleep, little baby, sleep."

Not on thy mother's breast,

But with the quiet dead."

—MRS. SOUTHEY.

INTO the great dark gulf of the Past, nearly two years, like two waves from an ever-flowing sea, had vanished, freighted with their usual modicum of sorrow, joy, happiness, and despair.

And what changes had those two years brought to the various personages connected with our tale!

First, Mr. O. C. Toospeys, in whom I hope my fair readers feel an interest, had closed the eyes of his rich uncle, pocketed two thousand pounds, attired himself in the very deepest weeds, and began to turn his thoughts toward Dismal Hollow, and all "the real nice people around there."

Miss Clara Jernyngham had obtained the desire of her heart at last, was "Her Grace of B.," and, blissing in "family diamonds," was toasted as one of the reigning beauties and belles of the London *haut ton*. As to that "dear old thing," the duke, the pretty little duchess troubled her head very little about him; and he was left at home, to amuse himself with alternate fits of the palsy and gout, and the other diseases old gentlemen are heir to.

Captain George Jernyngham had risen to the rank of colonel, now, having been promoted for his bravery in a certain action; and an old uncle, whom he had hardly heard of before, coming at the same time from the East Indies with an uncountable lot of money, and the liver disease, was accommodating enough to die in the nick of time, leaving all his wealth to our gay guardsman. These two strokes of good fortune enabled Master George to offer his hand, with a safe conscience, to handsome Lady Kate, which he did, without even hinting at such a thing as a chandler's shop. Lady Kate showed her good taste in the selection of a husband, by accepting him on the spot; and two weeks after, the *Times*, under the heading of "Marriage in High Life," announced the melancholy fact that Colonel Jernyngham was a bachelor no longer.

Of the gipsy Keturah, nothing was known. Now and then, at intervals, Earl De Courcy would catch a glimpse of a dark, wild face, with streaming hair, and hollow, sunken eyes, flitting after him like a haunting shadow from the grave. Wherever he went, night or day, that dusky, ominous shadow followed, dogging his steps like a sleuth-hound, until the dread of it grew to be a horror unspeakable—the vague, mysterious terror of his life. No precautions could rid him of it, until it became the very bane of his existence. If he walked, looking over his shoulder he would see that tall, spectral figure coming after; if he sat in his carriage, and it chanced to stop for a moment, a white, wild face, with great burning eyes, would gleam in upon him for an instant with deadly hate and menace in every feature, and then vanish like a face from the dead.

Neither night nor day was he safe from his terrible pursuer, until the dread of this ghostly ghouls wore the very flesh off his bones, reduced him to a mere living skeleton, poisoned every joy of his existence, made death and life a blank and a horror, until the birth of his little granddaughter. And the only tender feeling in his story heart centered in her; she became the only thing that rendered life desirable. His love for the child amounted

to idolatry; in its infant innocence and beauty, it seemed like a protecting angel standing between him and his terrible pursuer, lighting the gloom of that awful haunting shadow with the brightness of unseen wings.

The last cold gleam of yellow sunshine faded from the dull March sky. Night, with black, starless, moonless face, with cold, piercing wind and sleet, was falling over London.

The gorgeous rooms, the glittering salons, the spacious halls of the De Courcy mansion were one blaze of light and magnificence, just as they were that very night two years before—that awful night of darkest doom. By all but one that night was forgotten now; for a gay party-party were to meet to celebrate the first birthday of Lord De Courcy's grandchild. Strange, that on the very anniversary of that dreadful night, another scene should be born to the house of De Courcy.

The guests had not yet begun to assemble; and standing by himself, wrapt in gloomy thought, the earl gazed darkly out into the deepening night. You would scarcely have known him, so changed had he grown by the blighting influence of that horrible incubus. Thin and haggard, with sunken eyes, projecting brows, snow-white hair and care-worn look, he stood the very shadow of his former self—a stricken, bowed, gloomy old man.

Through the inky darkness the rays from the street-lamp sent long lines of light and shade across the pavement. That very night, two years before, a face, white with woman's utmost woe, had gleamed upon him in that very light, as he stood in that self-same spot. He thought of it now with a convulsive shudder; and the flickering light seemed like a finger of blood-red flame pointing up to heaven, and invoking its wrath upon him. With an inward presentiment he looked through the darkness as if expecting that same dark, unearthly face to appear; and, lo! while he gazed, as if she had sprung up through the earth, a tall, shadowy figure emerged from the darkness, and that awful spectral face, he dreaded more than that of the arch fiend himself, gleamed white and awful through the gloom. She beheld him there in the light, and again that long, bony arm was raised, and that flickering finger pointed up to the lowering sky above, in darkest, voiceless menace. Then, flitting away in the darkness, to which she seemed to belong, the ghastly vision was gone, and Earl De Courcy stood frozen with horror to the spot, unable to speak or move.

At that same hour, a far pleasanter scene was going on in one of the rooms above.

It was the dressing-room of Lady Maude, into which we once before introduced the reader. Once again she stood before the mirror while her maid assisted at her toilet, and chatted with the little Duchess of B., who, magnificent in white velvet and emeralds, sat (or rather lay) half-buried in the downy depths of a lounge—having taken advantage of her girlhood's intimacy with Lady Maude to come early, and indulge in what she phrased the "sweetest of talks," before she should descend to the drawing-room, and begin her nightly occupation of breaking masculine hearts.

Very fair, very sweet, very lovely looked Lady Maude, as she stood there with a soft smile on her gentle lips, and a calm, deep joy welling from the brooding depths of her soft eyes.

Her dress was white, even as it had been that night—white blonde over white satin—with her favorite jewels (pale oriental pearls) wreathing her shining ringlets of jet, and fluttering and shimmering in sparks of subdued fire on her white arms and bosom. The lovely young face looking out from those silky curls was sweeter and fairer now in her gentle maturity than it had ever been in the brilliant beauty of her girlhood. Scarcely twenty, her form had not attained the roundness of perfect womanhood, but was slight and slender as a girl of fourteen, yet perfect in its elegant contour.

"And the baby is well?" the duchess was languidly saying, as she played with a beautiful little water-spaniel.

"Quite well, thank you," replied the low, sweet voice of Lady Maude, with her soft, musing smile.

"I need not ask for his lordship, for I saw him last night at the *bal masque* of Madame la Comtesse de St. Remy?" said the duchess, with some animation. "He was looking quite kindly as 'Leicester.' By the way, Lady Maude, why were you not there?"

Erminie seemed slightly indisposed, I fancied, and I would not leave her," answered the young mother.

"Is it possible? Well, I am very fond of children; but I do not think I could give up so brilliant an affair as last night's *masquerade* even for such a sweet little angel as Erminie. What do you think, I made a complete conquest of that handsome melancholy Turkish ambassador, who is all the rage now! I had him all to myself the whole evening!"

"Was his grace present?" said Lady Maude, a little gravely.

The question took the little duchess so much by surprise, that she raised herself on her elbow, opened her blue eyes to their widest extent, and stared in silence at her questioner. Then, seeing Lady Maude was quite serious, she lay back among the velvet pillows, and burst into a silvery peal of laughter.

"His grace! Oh, that is too good! Why, Lady Maude, the last time I saw the poor, dear, old man, which is a week or two ago, he could not stir either hand or foot, and had to be carried about by that odious Italian valet of his, in a chair, whenever he wanted to move. The dear, helpless old thing! he did look so odd and so absurd, shaking all over with that disagreeable palsy of his, that I could not bear to go into his room since. My maid, Fanchette, always finds out how he is, and tells me. But the idea of his going to the *masquerade*! Oh, dear me!"

And the affectionate wife went off into another low, musical peal, that made the pretty, soft-eyed water-spaniel shake his neckle of tiny silver bells from sympathy, till they tinkled again.

Lady Maude looked as she felt—a little shocked—at this heartless levity; and madame la duchesse perceiving it, began:

"Now, Maude, there is no use in your looking so profoundly scandalized about it, because I have done nothing so very naughty. You don't expect me to go and shut myself up, and nurse him—do you? Though I dare say you, having the elements of a martyr in you, would do it just as soon as not."

"I would not flit with that Turkish ambassador, at all events!" said Lady Maude, in a tone of slight rebuke. "Have you not heard he has four wives already?"

"Perhaps he thinks I'll make a fifth some day!" said the duchess, laughing. "Well, I wouldn't mind much; he is handsome enough for anything. There! I knew I would shock you again. How saintly you have grown of late, Maude!"

"Oh, Clara!—Clara! what a mad little flirt you are!" said Lady Maude, half-smiling—half-sorrowful.

"Well, you see it's my nature. What a love of a little dog this is! I made a *marriage de convenance*; and what other result could you anticipate? I married the Duke of B. for his coronet; he married me because he wanted some one to nurse him, and poultice up his constitution, and sit at the head of his table, and make herself generally useful. I got what I aimed at; and if he has not, it shows I am the better politician of the two. Stand upon your hind-legs, Prince! And, therefore, oh, wise and discreet Lady Villiers! model wife and happy mother, you must not expect one who is neither to do otherwise than as she does. If my sole earthly happiness consists in a coach-and-four, superb diamonds, an unlimited number of lovers, and a box at the opera, why, I rather think I should be permitted to enjoy them, since I am really not a bad girl after all, and never mean to be. And now, as your toilet is completed, and I have made quite a long speech, will your ladyship be good enough to lead the way to the nursery? I want to see this little stray angel of yours before I descend among the sinners below."

Smiling, and passing her arm around the slender waist of the thoughtless little duchess, Lady Maude passed with her from the room, and the two young girls entered the nursery.

It was a beautiful room, all draped in white and pale-green, pure and peaceful as a glimpse of heaven. And in the center of the room stood a little rosewood crib, with snowy hangings, wherein lay a young infant, so surpassingly lovely that the duchess might well call it a "stray angel."

Little Erminie—sweet Erminie—the child of noble, princely Lord Villiers and beautiful Maude Percy—how shall I describe her? It is not often young babies are really pretty—doting grandmothers and aunts to the contrary notwithstanding; but this one really was. A snow-white complexion, with the softest pink tinge on the rounded cheeks and lips, as faint and delicate as the heart of a sea-shell; a profusion of palest golden hair falling in slight, rippling waves, like raveled silk, on the white, rounded forehead. Two tiny blue-veined hands grasped, even in sleep, a pretty French doll, holding it close to the soft, white bosom, and the long, golden lashes lay brightly on the rosy, sleep-flushed cheeks.

The lovely face of Lady Maude flushed with pride, love and happiness; and bending down, softly as the west wind kisses the sleeping flowers, her lips touched the babe's.

Light as the caress was, it awoke little Erminie. The golden lashes slowly lifted, and a pair of sweet blue eyes looked fearlessly up.

"Mamma," she cried, joyfully, holding up her rosy little arms, "mamma, take Minnie."

"Oh, the little darling!" exclaimed the duchess, catching her impulsively up, and half-smothering her with kisses. "Oh, did you ever see such a sweet little cherub! Oh, there never was such a lovely little angel! It's just the sweetest, dearest, b'ssed, tidy ickie sing that ever was, so it is!"

Baby, who evidently was an adept in broken English, and fully understood that profound-mysterious language known as "baby-talk," immediately, as if in reward for these exclamatory sentences, emphasized by the strongest italics, held up her rosy little mouth to be kissed again, being evidently (like all of her sex) fond of that operation.

"Oh, I never, never saw such a perfectly lovely little duck!" exclaimed the Duchess Clara, in a second burst of enthusiasm. "Such sweet hair, and such splendid eyes! Who does she look like, Maude? Not like you, I'm sure."

"She has her father's blue eyes and fair hair," said the happy young mother, smiling at Clara's emphasis, which rendered every other word not only into italics, but, in some cases, even into capitals.

"Oh, she is the most charming little ducks o' diamonds I ever beheld in my life! Such a beautiful skin, just like white satin!" reiterated the duchess, punctuating her remarks by a series of short, sharp little kisses, that made sweet Erminie open her large blue eyes in subdued wonder. "Oh, Maude! I don't wonder you are so saintly, with this little beautiful seraph ever with you

Still crouching as if she considered she had done something rather extraordinary than otherwise, Miss Minnie allowed herself to be taken by the nurse, and saw papa and mamma, and the little lady in velvet and diamonds, smile a good-by, and turn to leave the room. "Foolish little wife," said Lord Villiers, "lingering look behind" at her heart's treasure, "can you not even tear yourself away from your darling for a few hours, without straining your eyes to catch a last glimpse?"

"I know it is foolish," said Lady Maude, half apologetically, yet still keeping her yearning eyes fixed on little Erminie; "but I feel so strangely about leaving her to-night. You will be sure to take good care of her, Martha?"

"Sartin, my lady," responded Martha, rather offended at her want of trust in her care.

"Now, Maude," said Lord Villiers, amused at her still-apparent anxiety.

Half-laughing, half-reluctant, she allowed herself to be drawn from the room, and saw the door close between her and her child.

Down in the spacious drawing-room, Lady Maude soon found herself fully occupied in receiving the guests, who began to arrive thick and fast. But this did not remove her strange anxiety concerning Erminie; and about an hour after, she stole away for a moment to pay a hurried visit to the nursery.

All was calm and peaceful there. Little Erminie lay asleep once more in her crib, and Martha sat dozing in her rocking-chair. Half ashamed of her groundless fears, Lady Maude lightly kissed her sleeping infant and hurried away. Little did she dream how many years would rise and set—how many years would come and go—before they two should meet again.

The night in mirth and music was passing on, and the hour of midnight approached. The Duchess of B., Earl De Courcy, and Lady Maude were standing conversing together, when, as if struck by a sudden thought, the duchess exclaimed:

"Oh by the way, Lady Maude, do you recollect the strange voice that interrupted the ceremony the night you were married? Have you ever discovered who that was?"

Both Lady Maude and the earl grew pale. "Never! The whole affair has been wrapped in mystery ever since," said Lady Maude, with a slight shudder.

"Dear me, how frightened I was that night!" said the duchess, arranging her bracelets. "It was quite dreadful; the most mysterious thing—just like a ghost, or something in a play."

The duchess broke off suddenly and listened, as the great hall-clock tolled the hour of twelve. And just as the last stroke died away, that same terrific voice they had heard years before pealed through the spacious room like the deep tolling of a death-bell.

"Two years ago this night a legal murder was committed, and now the hour of retribution is at hand. The sins of the father shall be visited upon the children, and the children's children, even to the third and fourth generations. Woe to all of the house of De Courcy!"

As if the angel of death had suddenly descended in their midst, every face blanched, and every heart stood still with nameless horror. For one moment the silence of the grave reigned, then a wild, piercing shriek was heard through the house, and the nurse, with terror, blanched face, and uplifted arms, rushed into the midst of the assembled guests, screaming:

"Oh, Miss Minnie! Miss Minnie! Miss Minnie!"

"Oh, God! my child!" came from the white lips of Lady Maude, in a voice that those who heard never forgot, as she fled from the room, up the long staircase, and into the nursery.

But the crib was empty; the babe was gone. The wild, wild shriek of a mother's woe resounded through the house, and Lady Maude fell in a deadly swoon on the floor.

And when Lord Villiers—his own noble face white and set with unutterable anguish—burst into the room, he found her lying cold and lifeless on the floor.

Meanwhile, some of the most self-possessed of the guests had assembled round Martha, in order to extract from her, if possible, what had happened.

But with all her terror already, the continuous screaming of the frightened ladies completely drove every remaining gleam of sense out of her head, and her words were so wild and incoherent, that but little could be made out of them. It appeared from what she said, that she had been sitting half asleep in her chair, with her little charge wholly asleep in the cradle beside her, when suddenly a tall, dark shadow seemed to obscure the light in the room; and looking up with a start of terror, she beheld the most awful monster—whether man, or woman, or demon, she could not tell—in the act of snatching little Erminie from the cradle, and flying from the room. Frozen with horror, she had remained in her seat unable to move, until at last, fully conscious of what had taken place, she had fled screaming down stairs. And that was all she could tell. In vain they questioned and cross-questioned; they could obtain nothing further from the terrified Martha, and she succeeded in driving the few remaining words she had out of her head.

Lord Villiers, leaving his still-senseless wife in the care of her maid, with a face that seemed turned to marble, gave orders to have the house, the grounds, the whole of London, if necessary, ransacked in search of the abductor.

But there was one who sat bowed, collapsed, shuddering in his seat, who recognized that voice, and knew what those awful words meant; and that one was Earl De Courcy.

"She has murdered her!" was the cry that seemed rending his very heart with horror and despair.

CHAPTER XII.
WOMAN'S HATE.

"Oh, woman, woman, can cherish hate so deep and dark as this man's hood may!"

And when the mockery of fate had turned the house, the grounds, the whole of London, if necessary, ransacked in search of the abductor.

bolt from a bow, until the city seemed to fade away, and she saw green fields, and pretty cottages, and waving trees, and knew that she had left London behind her.

Night came on before she thought of stopping for a single instant to rest. She had walked far that day; her feet were bleeding and blistered; for nearly three days she had touched nothing but cold water, yet her iron frame was unshaken—she felt no weariness, no faintness, no hunger. The indomitable spirit within, sustained her. She thought of nothing, cared for nothing, but revenge; and for that her very soul was crying out with a longing—a hunger that nothing could appease. She dared not stop for one moment to think; she felt she would go mad if she did; so she hurried on and on, as if driven on by some fierce, inward power, against which it was useless to contend.

How the night passed, how the morning came, how she found herself in the peaceful depths of the forest, she never could tell. How, ere that sun set, she found herself with her tribe, lying prostrate on the cold ground, conscious, like one in the most frightful nightmare, of what was passing around her, yet unable to comprehend what it meant—all was vague and unreal still. Past, and present, and future, all were mingled together in one dark, dreadful chaos, of which nothing was real but the dull, muffled pain at her heart, and the word REVENGE, that kept ever dancing in letters of blood-red flame before her hot, scorching eyes.

She was conscious, in a lost, dreamy sort of way, that suns rose and set, and the insufficient light departed, and the dark, cool night came again and again; of seeing anxious eyes bent on her, and hearing hushed voices and subdued footfalls, and dusky, troubled faces stooping over her; but, like all the rest, it was a mocking unreality. The first shock of the blow had crushed and stunned her, numbing the sense of pain, and leaving nothing but the heavy throbbing ache at her strong, fierce heart. The woman of mighty frame, and fierce, stormy passions, lay there, motionless—stricken to the dust.

And then this departed, and another mood came.

One by one the broken links of memory returned, and then all other feelings were submerged and lost in a strong, deadly, burning desire of revenge—a revenge as fierce and as unrelenting as that of a tigress robbed of her cub.

A revenge as strong and unconquerable as the heart that bore it. With it came the recollection of his child; and drawing from her bosom the packet he had given her, she read (for gipsy, as she was she could read) the woman's address. There were two motives to preserve life; and, like a lioness rousing herself from a lethargy, the gipsy queen arose, and resolutely set her face to the task.

One determination she made, never to lose sight of him whom she hated, until her revenge was satisfied. For she could wait—there would be no sudden stabbing or killing; she did not believe in such vengeance as that—vengeance that tortures its victim but for a moment. Revenge might be slow, but it would be sure—she would hunt him, pursue him, torture him, until life was worse than death, until he would look upon death as a mercy; then he would have felt a tithe of the misery he had made her endure.

Another determination was, to leave her son's child with the tribe until such time as she should again claim it. She knew it would be well cared for with them, for they all loved their queen. And taking with her a lad whom she could trust, she left them one morning, and started for the child.

Leaving the gipsy youth some miles from the place, she approached the cottage, which was opened by the widow herself, who looked considerably startled by her dark, stern visitor. In the briefest possible terms, Keturah made known her errand, and imperiously demanded the child.

The woman, a mild, gentle-looking person, seemed grieved and troubled, and began something about her affection for the little one, and her hope that it would not be taken away.

"I want the child!—bring it here!" broke in the gipsy, with a fiercely impatient gesture.

The woman, terrified into silence by her dark, imperious visitor, went to the door and called.

"Here, Susan," answered a spirited young voice; and, with a gleeful laugh, a bright little fellow of three years bounded into the room, dragging after him, by the collar, a huge, savage-looking bulldog, who snapped fiercely at his captor.

The woman Susan uttered a scream, and fled from the dog to the other side of the room.

"I caught him, Susan, and pulled him in! He can't bite me, and at the last he howled, trippingly, his black eyes flashing with the consciousness of victory. Then, catching sight of the stranger, he stopped, and stared at her in silent wonder.

"He does beat all I ever seen—he beats afeard o' nothin'," said the woman, half-apologetically. "It be no fault o' mine, mistress; he will do his own way, spite o' all I can say."

The gipsy fixed her piercing eyes keenly upon him, and started to behold the living counterpart of her own son when, at the same age, there was the same clear, direct complexion, with a warm, healthy flush on the cheeks, and lips, the same bold, bright-black eyes, fringed by long silken lashes; the same high, noble brow; the same daring, undaunted, fearless spirit, flashing already in his young eyes.

Her hard face softened for an instant; but when she saw the thick, curling black hair, clustering round his head; noted the small, aristocratically-fasidious mouth, the long, delicate hand, she knew he must have inherited them from his mother—and she grew dark, and stern again. His smile, too, that lit up his beautiful face, and softened its dazzling splendor, was not his father's; but still he was sufficiently like him to bring a last ray of human feeling back to her iron heart.

"Little boy, come here," she said, holding out her hand.

Any other child would have been frightened by her odd dress, her harsh voice, and darkly-gleaming face; but he was not. It might be that child as he was, he had an instinct liking for strength and power, or it might have been his kindred blood that drew him to her—for he fearlessly went over, put his hand in hers, and looked up in her face.

"What is your name?" she said, in a softer voice, as she parted his thick, silky curls, and looked down into the dark splendor of his eyes.

"Raymond Germaine," was his answer.

The gipsy looked at Susan.

"His father's name was Germaine," the woman hastened to explain, "and I called him Raymond because I saw R. G. on his

father's handkerchief; and I thought maybe it might have been that."

"Very good. Will you come with me, Raymond?"

"If Susan lets me," answered the boy, looking at his foster-mother.

"She will let you," said the gipsy, calmly. "Get him ready instantly. I have no time to lose."

The woman, though looking deeply grieved and sorry, did not hesitate to obey, for there was something in the eyes of Keturah that might have made a bolder woman yield. So she dressed little Raymond in silence, made up the rest of his clothing in a bundle, kissed him, and said good-by amid many tears and sobs, and saw him depart with Keturah.

"Let me carry you—we have a long way to go," said the gipsy, stooping to lift him in her strong arms.

"I don't want to be carried. I'll walk," said Master Ray, kicking manfully.

The gipsy smiled a hard, grim smile. "His father's spirit," she muttered. "I like it. We'll see how long he will hold out."

For nearly an hour the little hero trudged sturdily along, but at the end of that time his steps began to grow slow and weary.

"Ain't we most there?" he said, looking ruefully down the long, muddy road.

"No; we're a long way off. You had better let me carry you."

With a somewhat sleepy look of mortification, Master Ray permitted his grandmother to lift him up; and scarcely had she taken him in her arms, before his curly head dropped heavily on her shoulder, and he was fast asleep.

With the approach of night, feeling somewhat fatigued and footsore herself, she overtook our friend Mr. Harkins, who, as he related to Mr. Toosy, "took 'er him," and brought her to his own house, where "Miss Arkins" regaled young Mr. Germaine with a supper of bread and milk, to which that small youth did ample justice.

Another hour brought her to the place where the gipsy-boy was waiting, and to his care she consigned her still-sleeping grandson, with many injunctions that he was to be taken the best care of. These commands were, however, unnecessary; for, looking upon the sleeping child as the future king of his tribe, the lad bore him along as reverentially as though he were a prince of the blood-royal.

Then the gipsy queen, Keturah, giving up all other thoughts but that of vengeance, turned her steps in the direction of London, where, by fortune-telling, and the other arts of her people, she could live and never lose sight of her deadly foe.

Everything concerning the De Courcys she learned. She heard of the marriage of Lord Villiers to Lady Maude Percy; and on the night of the wedding she had entered, unobserved by all, in the bustle, and screened from view behind a side-door, she had uttered the words that had thrown the whole assembly into such dismay. Then, knowing what must be the consequence, she had fled instantly, and was far from danger ere the terrified guests had recovered sufficient presence of mind to begin the search.

How after that she haunted, harassed, and followed the earl, is well-known to the reader, and the success of this course was sufficient even to satisfy her, implacable as she was.

She saw that her beginning to be slow torture to him—that his dread of her was amounting to a monomania with him; and still she pursued him, like some awful nightmare, wherever he went, keeping him still in view.

With the birth of little Erminie, she saw a still more exquisite torture in store for him. Her very soul bounded with the thought of the life-long misery she might heap upon him through the means of this child, whom she had heard he idolized. From the first moment she had heard of its birth, her determination was to steal it—to make away with it—murder it—anything—she did not care what, only something to make him feel what she had felt.

She had been, for a time, delirious, when she first heard of her son's death; but that grief lasted but for a short time; and then she rejoiced—yes, actually rejoiced—that he was dead and free from all future earthly misery. Death would have been to her a relief, had she not been determined to live for revenge.

She had lost a child—so should they; and then, perhaps, they would be able to comprehend the wrong they had made her suffer.

But in spite of all her attempts, a year passed, and she had found no means of carrying this threat into execution. The baby was so seldom taken out, and then always in a carriage with its mother and the nurse, that it was impossible to think of obtaining it. To enter the house, except on the occasion of a ball, or party, when servants and all would be busily occupied, was not to be thought of, either. But on the night of the abduction, hearing of the party to be given at the mansion, and remembering that it was the anniversary of her son's death, she had been wrought up to a perfect frenzy of madness, and resolved to obtain the child, even at the cost of her life.

Toward midnight, she had cautiously entered, thinking all were most likely to be in the drawing-rooms at that hour, and having previously heard from the servants, by apparently careless questions, where the nursery was situated, bent her steps in that direction.

Pausing at the door, which was ajar, she had glanced through, and beheld child and nurse both asleep.

To steal cautiously in, snatch up the child, muffle it so lightly in her cloak that if it cried it could not be heard, and fly down the staircase, was but the work of an instant. Pausing for an instant before the door of the grand saloon, in her fleet descent, she had boldly uttered her denunciation, and then, with the speed of the wind, had flown through the long hall, out of the door, and away through the wind and sleet, as if pursued by the arch-demon himself.

When she paused, at last, from exhaustion, she was on London Bridge. Darkly came back the memory of the night, just two years before, when, with deadly despair in her heart, she had stood in that selfsame spot, on the point of committing self-murder. With a fierce impulse, she opened her cloak and lifted the half-smothered infant high above her head, to dash it into the dark waters below. For one moment she held it poised in the air, and then she drew it back.

"No," she said, with a deadly smile; "it will be a greater revenge to let it live—to let it grow up a tainted, corrupted, miserable outcast; and then, when spurned alike by God and man, present it to them as their child. Ha! ha! ha! that will be revenge indeed! Live, pretty one—live! You are far too precious to die yet."

Awakened from her sound sleep by the unusual and unpleasant sensation of the bitter March storm beating in her face, little Erminie began to cry. Wrapping it once more in her thick mantle, the gipsy, knowing there

was no time to lose, fled away in the direction of a low house in St. Giles, where, with others of her tribe, she had often been, and the proprietor of which was a gipsy himself, and a member of her own tribe. Here, safe from all pursuit, she could stay with the child until the first heat of the search was past, and then—then to begin her tortures once more.

Little Erminie grieved without ceasing for "mamma," at first, and seemed almost to know the difference between the miserable den wherein she was now located and the princely home she had left. It was not in any heart, however hard, to dislike the lovely infant; and much as Keturah hated the race from which she sprung, she really pitied the little, gentle, helpless babe. So, from two motives—one a feeling of commiseration for the child, and the other a fierce, demoniacal desire that she should live to be the instrument of her vengeance—she procured a nurse for little Erminie, a woman a shade better than the rest of her class, who had lately lost a child of her own; and owing to her care, little Erminie lived. Lived—but for what fate!

(To be continued—commenced in No. 290.)

Idaho Tom, THE YOUNG OUTLAW OF SILVERLAND!

BY OLL COOMES.
CHAPTER XXVIII.

IDAHO TOM VISITS THE ISLAND.

Two days of anxiety and uneasiness passed to both those upon the land and those upon the bay. None of the latter save Zoe, however, were seen upon the island in all this time; and Frank Casleton, who, with his friends, still lingered around Tahoe, was satisfied that Hubert Leland and his men were at their mysterious work, whatever that might be.

Frank would have been tempted to visit the island had he possessed a canoe. It seemed like an age since he had seen Zoe, or more like a vague dream in which he had known her, than in reality.

He had not seen Idaho Tom since the morning he had saved his life—the morning of the compact. The hills were swarming with foes, and so they were compelled to keep under cover most of the time. Whenever they did venture forth, it was with extreme caution. Meanwhile, Idaho Tom had not lost sight of the bay, nor the object of his affection; and while he labored under the same disadvantage as his rival, in the want of a canoe to visit the island, he had recourse to the same means used a few days previous in communicating with Zoe.

Having procured a broad-brimmed panama hat at the cabin of the Mad Trapper, he proceeded to convert it into a little transport for the conveyance of messages to the island. Around and over the crown he entwined green parasites and leaves until the whole top of the hat was concealed from view. To this he attached a little sail—the same that Zoe had sent attached to his love-barge a few days previous.

Carrying his delicate craft to a point on the bay where the wind would carry it straight toward the island, he placed it upon the water, freighted with a message of love, and turned it loose at the mercy of the waves.

Gaily the little transport sped away upon its mission, while with a joyous heart, Tom hastened around the bay to the leeward of the island, there to await a reply from the maiden.

Under the green-draped boughs of a low, scrubby pine he sat down to wait and watch. He waited for long hours. Under any other circumstance his patience would have been exhausted; but if he looked for, longed for, message only came at all, he would feel amply repaid for all time spent in waiting.

To his joy he finally saw the little sail scud out from the island, and bear gaily down toward him. With eager eyes he watched its approach—with burning impatience he waited its arrival.

At length it touched upon the beach at his feet. In among its green drapery he saw that some bright flowers had been entwined by a basty hand. This alone would have been strong evidence to Tom of Zoe's love; but it was not all. He found a little slip of paper nestled in among the flowers. He took it out and with wildly throbbing heart, read these words:

"Remembered friend!—All is well at the island. Accept my thanks for your kind regards. I shall never cease to pray for you and your friend, Mr. Casleton. Zoe."

"Remembered friend," mused the love-sick youth; "I wonder if she remembers me with no other thoughts than those of mere friendship! She surely does, but then the promptness of her reply; the presence of those flowers—both are significant of something that gives me encouragement."

He placed the note carefully away in an inner pocket of his shirt; then he lifted his novel little transport from the water and concealed it, never dreaming that a pair of restless eyes were watching him—noting every movement he made.

With a joyous heart he turned and moved back toward the bay, and would have continued on up the valley toward the cabin of the Mad Trapper, had his keen eye not caught sight of a canoe beached on the northern shore. The temptation that this held out to him was too strong to be overcome, and he resolved to visit the island at once. So, launching the craft, he sprang into it, seated himself, and taking up the paddle pushed out into the bay and approached the island slowly and carefully.

With a light of joy beaming upon her lovely face, Zoe met him at the edge of the isle.

Having exchanged words significant of pleasure on meeting, Tom said:

"I beg you will pardon my intrusion, Zoe. I found this canoe upon the beach and without a moment's hesitation or a second thought as to how it came there, I sprang into it and started for this island."

"You are very welcome, Mr. Taylor," the maiden responded, "though I recognize the canoe as the one in which father went ashore nearly an hour ago."

"Indeed! Then I must hurry back. He will be disappointed if the canoe is not there when he returns to where he left it. But, Zoe, I could not resist the temptation to visit this island when the means were afforded."

"I am sure I know of nothing here so very attractive," responded Zoe, half defining the youth's most treasured thoughts, "unless it is the secret with which this island must seem endowed to strangers. But, Tom, is Mr. Casleton in the vicinity yet?"

"He may be in the neighborhood of the lake, though I have not seen him since the morning we left here together."

"I am sure he is not as appreciative of kindness as I have endeavored to be to you, Tom," she said with a pleasant smile. "I saved his life, and he has taken it as a matter

of fact, and never showed himself since he left. You saved my life and I have endeavored to show a just appreciation of the noble deed. But, indeed, Tom, that little letter transport of yours is a decided originality, and oh! it is such a relief from the monotonous vigils of the long days, to see it come sailing across the water. Father knows nothing of our correspondence yet, and whether he would disapprove of it as being improper, I am sure I cannot say. I would do nothing against my father's will, and if at any time I fail to answer, you will know that his objections are the cause. He certainly knows, however, that boys and girls couldn't live without play, and the smile that had been hovering upon her lips, broke into a soft ripple of musical laughter.

"Then you regard the exchange of those notes as child's play, do you, Zoe?" Tom asked, his young heart trembling in suspense.

"It's a decided novelty," replied the artless maiden, whose pure, womanly instinct shrunk from the thought of offending the youth by word or deed. "I enjoy it very much, call it what you may; and I do hope that I may continue to hear from you. I feel much safer and happier, when I know there are those around us who are not our natural enemies; as I consider the Indians and outlaws."

"Zoe," said Tom, with a tremor in his voice, "I could be content to watch you and your friends from danger forever, just if I could only be assured of one thing."

"That must be very precious," she replied, gazing away across the water as though she suspected not the object of the youth's avowed self-devotion.

"It is precious, Zoe," he replied, in a tone soft and low as the summer wind; "it would be worth more to me than all the gold on the Pacific shores. And that prize is your love."

The maiden could not conceal her embarrassment. Her face flushed crimson, and her eyes sought the ground. She could not receive this confession of love with indifference, for all she knew what was coming.

Tom noticed her confusion, and accepted it as favorable to him. His heart took courage, but, while waiting for an answer, his eyes fell upon her little brown hands that were toying confusedly with a cluster of leaves, and he started as though an adder had stung him.

Upon one of her fingers flashed a diamond ring which he recognized at a glance. It was the same ring that he had lost at poker in the "Ophir Exchange," at Virginia City—the same ring that had been won by the two strangers that he afterward saw dead in the cabin of the Mad Trapper.

The young outlaw grew almost sick at heart, for it seemed as though Zoe held the jewel so—it would flash the terrible truth into his mind—the truth of his being a gambler, a vagabond and outlaw, in the western acceptance of these terms.

The silence that followed both his and Zoe's slight confusion was broken by the latter.

"Tom," she said, "I hope you will not incur father's displeasure by causing him to remain in waiting for his canoe upon the shore. I would be pleased to see you again, for I cannot answer you now regarding the matter of which you speak. Moreover, I want you to have more time to think over what you have confessed, and perhaps you will then think altogether different. Rest assured that my feelings toward you are all they could possibly be, and I dare say will remain the same."

She spoke with the calm thoughtfulness of a woman of mature age. At the same time it seemed to Tom that she was keeping that tell-tale ring glaring into his eyes to remind him of the past.

"I shall live in hopes until I have a direct answer from you," he replied. "So, good-evening, Zoe."

He stepped into the canoe, and seating himself, pulled rapidly for the shore. A few vigorous strokes of the paddle brought him to the beach. Leaving the canoe where he had found it, he turned away into the woods with both pleasant and bitter thoughts surging through his mind.

One's sins are always visited upon his head," he mused, "no difference whether he has reformed and is doing better or not. Now, that confounded ring is the very same one that I lost—lost at poker that night at the Ophir; and the man that won it gave it to her. They were doubtless intimate friends of hers, and Jack Hill said they were detectives. But, after all, I believe the little fairy loves me. I have only to live right hereafter—show that I can be something else than a vagabond—in order to gain her confidence. But I'd like to know why she's so confounded particular when her father and friends are—are—well, I won't say what. At any rate, I'll be a man hereafter, whether I win or lose. I know I've got the start on Frank, for he hasn't been over to see her since we left. And blamed if she wasn't inclined to fret about it, too; but then, I reckon she don't care anything for him particularly. I've got the start of him, and just so long as I can keep it honorably, I'll do so. And I will never do another mean thing. From this day on dates my reform, for all I haven't been so awful mean. If Frank wins, as I told him, my best wishes will go with him and her. This, I know, is not natural, but one might as well make the best of a defeat. I could easily slip around and shoot Frank, and then if Zoe wouldn't consent to be my wife, I could bring friends enough to carry her away and force her to terms; but the Lord forbid such a mean, villainous act. But, bah! she was right, after all. She spoke about our child's play. Here I am, a boy of eighteen, in love—sitting about a wife and love, and such things; but, hang it, I do love her. A boy can love as well as a man, and a girl as well as a woman. I don't know about my sense, but I do know she's got as much as a woman of twenty-five. But that plagued ring!—that's what's hurting now. I'd like to know why she kept it blazing away at me. I know it's the same ring, and so them fellows must have found out who I was. If it costs me Zoe's love, it will be a lesson never to sit down in another gambling-house again, even if I am rejected from society of mankind. That ring will be thorn in my side for God only knows how long. But I'll abide the fiat of Fate, come weal or woe."

CHAPTER XXIX.
ZOE LELAND'S PERIL.

It was on the day following that of Idaho Tom's visit to the floating island, that the beautiful Zoe Leland sat alone upon the island, keeping her dove-like watch over the bay, during the usual absence of her father and friends.

Her pretty face wore a thoughtful expression, and her restless eyes a vacant, dreamy and far-off look. That her mind was not as free, nor her heart as light as usual, was plainly perceptible. She swept the shores at times with an eager, anxious look. Sometimes she would start, with a quick, impatient movement, at sight of a moving object along the margin of the woods; but when she saw,

TROUBLE IN CHINA.

BY JOE JOOT, JR.

There lived in the city of Peking
A rare old Chinese mandarin,
Who had plenty of tea and lots of tin,
And he always signed his leases "Ah Fin."
He never bothered his poor relations,
And never allowed them to bother him;
He was down on poetry with a vim,
Would rather swing by his queue from a limb,
Or with rocks in his pockets go out to swim,
Than countenance lowly stations.

Among other chattels of this Ah Fin
Was counted a daughter, named Kum Win,
A very celestial creature,
Who was looked upon as being quite stout—
Three hundred and fifty, or close thereabout,
And looked very like, so descriptions ran,
The beauties you see on a Chinese fan.
When you're tired of watching the preacher,
The bloom of her cheeks it is but proper
To say was the royal color of copper,
Just the hue that we'd not sigh for,
But which a Chinaman would die for;
A real piece of Chinese ware,
She was in every particular;
Her eyes—you never saw such eyes—
Were like two cuts in the top of pies,
And pointed down to the end of her nose
Quite perpendicular, you would suppose,
In the fashion the Chinese wear 'em.
This style hasn't got here yet, but still
It won't be long before it will,
For the ladies are getting from Patagonia,
And from the west of New Caledonia,
The styles which are harem-scarem.

Her feet were so little, so it was talked,
She took them under her arm when she walked;
This couldn't be so any more, I am led
To believe,
Than you could climb up and sit down on your
head
While you laughed in your sleeve.
But this I know, they were so small
They couldn't support her body at all,
And she had to crawl along the wall,
And hired a maid to dance at the hall
To which she'd been invited;
If she happened to fall, she was so fat,
It took a crowd of men one at a time,
To get the maiden righted.

Among other things which Mam'selle Win
Had taken to her affections,
Including edible birds' nest soup,
And rais and rice salad in a coop,
Was a Chinaman named Sum Punk,
Who at such times when he wasn't drunk
On opium, did a business slogging,
In the clothes-line—taking in washing.

When the old man smelt some mice in the wind,
He told his daughter to bear in mind
That if ever again at this Sum Punk—
The fellow who carried so very much cheek—
He caught her throwing glances oblique,
He would make of her body a lifeless chunk,
And leave her unburied a week.

When Monsieur Punk heard of this decree
The bug in his house was a bundle-dee,
The first thing he did was to smoke a hunk
Of opium and get very drunk;
Then he took one side of a chest of tea,
And wrote in letters bold and free
This missive, which rather puzzled me
To make it out, but I stood on my head
And found that this is the way it read:

"Adorable creature, I'm in the snids,
My heart is wrung like a handful of duds.
It never can stand such a terrible rub,
And I long to drown myself in a tub;
To see my fond desires go crashing,
It breaks me down like a whole day's washing,
And I feel most terribly put out,
Or I should say taken down—and blue
As a nice ironed shirt full of indigo,
And I'm out of heart and of hope,
And am wearing away like a piece of soap,
For my love for you without a doubt,
With boiling and rinsing will not wash out,
And I long to end this life of mine
By hanging myself on a clothes-line,
And have a washboard set at my head,
And a bar of soap at my feet.
To tell them I would rather be dead,
Than be washed away from my sweet."

"Let us fly away from this land unkind
Like a couple of nightcaps loose in the wind,
I've saved the buttons for many weeks,
I gathered them from the ends of peeks;
Besides, I've cabaged sundry
Articles which were sent to the laundry,
For the right way to make your fees is,
Whoever is broken, to save the pieces.
So bundle your washing and let us fly,
To where we can hang out high and dry."

Now the mandarin sat drinking his tea,
And using his chop-stick rather free,
When the note was thrown in the window,
And hit him along the side of the head,
He was rather forebodingly struck, he said,
After the letter he had read,
That he would iron that fellow out,
Before he knew what he was about,
Or set him down for a Hindoo,
So he hurried away and found Mr. Punk
Working away at packing his trunk,
To be checked across the Pacific,
And grabbing his queue without a word,
He cut his head off with his sword,
In one great swoop terrific,
And cut him into twelve parts at a breath,
For he said that Chinese cozen,
As in life, should continue to count in death
His pieces by the dozen.

So Kum Win she pined away,
Refusing to eat upon week-day,
Moping around about the house,
Each moment growing thinner,
Till at last she choked on a pickled mouse
Which she tried to swallow for dinner.

Getting the Start of Him.

BY EREN E. REXFORD.

"HERE are your letters, sir," said the office-boy, popping his head into the room, and tossing three or four letters on the table.

Allan Stephens opened the first one he got hold of, and began to read it. As he read a look of surprise came into his face, succeeded by one of bewilderment; this in turn gave place to one of amusement.

"I see how it is," he said, as he finished it. "Tom wrote to Sparks at the same time he wrote to me, and sent Sparks' letter to me, and mine to Sparks. Lucky for me, I declare. I'll read it again to make sure."

The letter read as follows:

DEAR SPARKS:—
I meant to have answered your note before, but have been busy. I wanted to take a run up your way this summer, but have just concluded to make a visit to Groton. I'll warrant you'll smile when you read that, and look knowing, and say you know what there is at Groton to attract me, and perhaps you do know. I shouldn't wonder much if you did. I might as well be honest and tell you the truth—I'm going up to see Olive Graem. I thought, one while, that Al Stephens was sure of her, and I think now he could have got her if he had tried very hard, but he's so bashful, you know, that probably the idea of popping the question frightened him. I think Miss Olive has got about tired of waiting for him to come to time, and I'm going to try my luck. I shall write to Stephens to-day, telling him that I am going up to Groton, and mentioning in a sort of confidential way what my errand is. If he has any notion of marrying Miss Olive he'll probably start for Groton immediately, but I shall leave on the 20th, and in that way get the start of him in more ways than one, I hope. Wish me success.
Yours, always,
TOM VANE."

"Ah-ha! Mr. Vane!" laughed Allan, as he laid down the letter. "You made quite a mistake, didn't you? Good gracious!"—suddenly remembering what day of the month it was—"this is the 20th, and Vane's probably half-way to Groton by this time. He'll get the start of me, sure enough. Why was I such a fool as to dally along in the way I have! I'll warrant she is vexed because I haven't spoken out, as they tell of, and she'll marry him, if he asks her first, just out of spite. I wonder if I could possibly get to Groton to-night!"

Allan hunted up a paper containing a railroad time-table, and found that he could get to Groton at nine o'clock.

"I'm going, if I don't get there till two," said he, desperately, cramming a few neces-

sary articles into a traveling-bag. "Tip"—to the office-boy—"I'm going away—going immediately, and I don't know when I shall be back. Take care of things," and he was off. He reached the station just in time to get aboard the train.

"Conductor," said he to that official, when he came around, "do you know what time the train from Lancaster gets into Groton?"

"At nine o'clock," answered the conductor.

"Ah-ha! Mr. Tom Vane, I'll give you a pretty snug pull," laughed Allan, at this piece of information. "If you don't get there until nine, and I get there at the same time, I don't fancy that you'll get much chance to ask Miss Olive that very important question of yours to-night, and I'll have the start of you in the morning, if I have to get up at four o'clock and call her out of bed to do it."

Allan kept up a pretty busy thinking as the train whirled him on toward Groton. What if Vane should get the start of him, after all? He didn't know how he could give up Olive Graem. He had known her ever since they were children together; he couldn't remember when he first thought of marrying her, it was so long ago. But he had never said anything about it to her. He supposed she understood what his intentions were, however. Now he reflected that girls are not always supposed to know what young gentlemen's intentions are.

"I ought to have had some sort of an understanding with her before this," said Allan. "I see my mistake now. But I was waiting to get started in business. However, if I get there all right, I'll risk but my chance is as good as Tom Vane's is."

But he wasn't to get to Groton that night. As the train was going at a rapid rate, in the early dusk of evening, there came a sudden crash, a shiver, and then there were cries and wild confusion, and as soon as anything could be ascertained it was found that two or three cars had been thrown off the track.

"I've lost her," groaned Allan, when he realized the nature and extent of the accident.

He got off and fell to work helping clear away the debris from the track. Fortunately no one had been killed, and but one or two wounded.

"How long before we can go on!" he asked the conductor.

"I don't know," was the reply. "The engine is disabled. There'll be a train up at eight to-morrow morning. We probably shan't get away until that comes along."

Poor Allan! He felt like flying. It was just about nine o'clock then, and Tom Vane was getting off the train at Groton. In about half an hour he would be shaking hands with Olive.

And then! Allan felt shaky all over to think of what might come to pass. Just as likely as not he would up and propose, the first thing! He was coming on purpose to do that, and the sooner it was over with the better, he would be quite apt to think.

"I'd be ashamed to rush the thing like that," vociferated Allan, as if he knew that his rival was asking the important question that very moment.

"Hey! what's that?" asked an elderly woman, with four or five parcels and an umbrella, looking somewhat alarmed at the vehemence with which he spoke. "You ain't hurt, be ye?"

"No, I'm not," answered Allan, curtly. "Wall, you needn't be so snappish about it," answered the woman. "You'd better be thankful that you're alive, an' not be a lookin' mad enough to bite somebody."

"I don't believe I shall undertake to bite you," answered Allan, feeling out of sorts with himself and everybody else. "I never liked anything sour."

"Must be you hate yourself wuss'n pison, then," retorted the old lady. "I must say you're about the sourest lookin' specimen I've seen lately."

Allan concluded he didn't feel like carrying on the conversation further, and started off for a stroll down the track that he was on. He walked on and on, taking no note of how far he was going, or how late it was getting to be. He couldn't help thinking of Tom Vane and Olive, and wondering if the question had been asked and answered.

"I wonder if she would be fool enough to have him!" Allan asked himself. He finally concluded that girls were such queer things that one couldn't tell anything about what they would or would not be likely to do. It was just as the mood took them.

When he did stop thinking of Olive and Tom Vane and himself long enough to take notice of his surroundings, he found that he was near a large farm-house that had a very hospitable look about it. The light shone out pleasantly from the sitting-room, and he heard the sound of a piano. He stopped and listened. Some one was playing the "Whisperings of Love Waltz."

"Olive played that for me the last time I was up to see her," thought Allan. "Maybe she'll never play it for me again," and the poor fellow heaved an awful sigh.

"I wonder if I hadn't better stop and see if I can stay here all night! I've got to stay somewhere, and this is a nice-looking place. I'll try my luck, any way."

He knocked.

A gentleman came to the door. "I was on the train that ran off the track back here a ways," explained Allan. "We can't get away till morning. Could I stay all night?"

"Of course you can," was the reply, in genuine country welcome. "Come in, and we'll get you something to eat, and try to make you comfortable."

Allan followed his host into the sitting-room. A girl was seated at the piano. There was something in the slender form that made Allan's heart give a great jump. It was like Olive's, but then, of course, this girl wasn't Olive! He was foolish to think of such a thing.

She turned around when they came in, and Allan gave a shout that was as full of enthusiasm and delight as was ever the war-whoop of a Comanche when he captured an enemy.

"Olive Graem, as sure as I'm alive!" cried Allan, rushing up with outstretched hands, and a wonderful beaming countenance. "Where under the sun and earth did you come from?"

"I came from Groton," answered Olive, rather amused at the enthusiasm Allan was exhibiting. "I'm sure I never expected to see you here."

"Nor I you," answered Allan. "I was going up on purpose to see you. When the cars ran off I was terribly discouraged, but I think fate had the matter in hand."

At this juncture Olive introduced him to the gentleman of the house, who hastened off in search of some one to get some supper for him.

"I'm glad he's gone," said Allan. "Oh Olive, I was going up to ask you a—very important question."

"About what?" asked Olive, very demurely.

"You know well enough, I know," said Allan, beginning to feel one of his bashful fits

coming on at the very moment when it hadn't ought to.

"How should I?" asked Olive, as innocently as you please. "If it's anything I can advise you about, I'm sure I shall be happy to do so."

"It's you I want," burst out Allan, and the effort he made to say it used up about all the courage he had. "Do say yes, quick!"

"I'm not sure but he expected to see Tom Vane's face in the door every moment, from the hurry he was in to have the matter settled.

"Well—yes!" answered Olive, who had known for a long time that Allan thought her property whenever he got ready to claim her, only it had taken him a good while to get ready to say so.

Allan kissed her a dozen times for that one word, and declared he was the luckiest, happiest man in the world. He didn't explain why he was in such a hurry, though, but when he was in his own room that night, he informed Tom Vane, wherever that mortal was, that he'd like to see him get the start of him."

The next day when Olive and Allan got off the train at Groton, they found Tom Vane there waiting.

"How do you do?" said Allan, shaking hands magnanimously with his rival. "My train ran off the track, but that didn't hinder me from getting the start of you!"

Tom understood the situation of affairs at a glance, and said nothing.

The moral of my story is, that when a man has anything to say, he should say it, or somebody may get the start of him.

Johnny Hatch;
OR,
THE BOY DETECTIVE "JUGGED."

BY OLL COOMES.

On the banks of the Brushy Fork Creek—a small tributary to the Licking River—along which ran the public highway between Flint Ridge and Claylick, stood a tall, wooden building, known thereabouts as Crown's Pottery. Under a wide shed adjacent was a clay-mill, with a long, creaking sweep; and hard by, a large, stone-crowned kiln, with its gaping furnaces and low-browed chimneys.

Under the management of Mr. Crown, this establishment had gained considerable notoriety as a pottery, but that gentleman dying, business was stopped entirely for a long time. Weeds grew up around the shop and kiln, and the place gradually assumed the aspect of a deserted ruin. The widow Crown seeing the daily decrease in the value of her estate, concluded to save what little remained by making a sale of the property. This she soon succeeded in doing, three brothers named Lake being the purchasers.

Two of these men were practical turners, and so Crown's Pottery again took on a business aspect. Passers-by heard the creak of the clay-mill resumed, and once more gazed into the glowing jaws of the furnaces.

But so seldom did the brothers turn a kiln of ware that people finally began to think they were not making the success of the business that their predecessor had. It is true, the two brothers were always engaged at the wheel when strangers called to see the wonderful performance of making a jug, or upon business with the firm, and they always had plenty of money; but those who had got some idea of the cost of the business from Mr. Crown could not see how the Lake brothers kept up expenses; and so those persons were inclined to mistrust the brothers of being engaged in some other speculation not strictly legitimate, little dreaming of the facts.

One day a stranger called at the shop and asked for employment as a potter. He was a powerful man, standing nearly seven feet in his shoes, with arms and legs proportionately long. He gave his name as Mahlon Griffith.

"We are not wanting a turner now, Mr. Griffith," Enoch Lake replied. "The sale of ware is due at this season, and brother Henry and I will manage to turn enough to supply the demand."

"I think times will be brighter afore long," replied Mahlon, with a broad vernacular, "and if so, it'll be cash in your duds to have a big stock on hand. I'm an ole potter, gentlemen, and have noticed that the stone-ware market fluctuates up and down, up and down right along—a low depression of the market bein' followed by an extreme."

"Very true, Mr. Griffith, but as we have made no arrangements for running three wheels, it will be impossible for us to run three men."

"I see you have a third wheel in your shop."

"Yes, sir, that's an extra one for extra large ware—such as urns, kegs and so forth."

"Large ware is my hold, gents," said Mahlon. "I can turn a bigger vessel than any man in the State of Ohio, and I'll bet on it, too. You see I've the arm for it; that's as true a foot as ever kicked a treadle, and that's as stiddy a hand as ever held a rib or sponge."

"That reminds me," said Enoch, reflectively, "that a stranger called here this morning and wanted a thirty or forty gallon jug made."

"Je-whiz! forty gallon jug! He must 'a' been crazy," exclaimed Griffith.

"He offered me ten dollars if I would make it for him, but it is larger than we're able to make. And now if you will turn the jug, I will give you a two dollar bill."

"Nuff said!" exclaimed the stalwart potter, stripping off his coat and rolling up his sleeves, displaying a pair of powerful, brawny arms.

He then descended into the clay-vault and brought up a huge lump of tempered clay which he rolled into a round ball on a bench made for that purpose. This done, he mounted the "big wheel," and placed the ball upon the head-piece, then setting the wheel in motion, went to work on the huge jug.

The Lake brothers stood by the slide-board and watched him, with amazement written upon their faces. They had seen the skillful manipulations of clay by men reputed the best potters in the land, but never had they seen anything equal to the skill of the giant stranger. The soft clay seemed to yield obedience to the very impulse of his will, and the consequence was that in a few minutes the brothers looked upon the largest vessel they had ever seen for that purpose. This done, he mounted the "big wheel," and placed the ball upon the head-piece, then setting the wheel in motion, went to work on the huge jug.

The Lake brothers stood by the slide-board and watched him, with amazement written upon their faces. They had seen the skillful manipulations of clay by men reputed the best potters in the land, but never had they seen anything equal to the skill of the giant stranger. The soft clay seemed to yield obedience to the very impulse of his will, and the consequence was that in a few minutes the brothers looked upon the largest vessel they had ever seen for that purpose. This done, he mounted the "big wheel," and placed the ball upon the head-piece, then setting the wheel in motion, went to work on the huge jug.

"You'll have to let it dry on the wheel, boys," said the giant potter, as he descended from the stall; "it is too big to move afore it's dry."

Then he washed his hands and arms, rolled down his sleeves, put on his coat and took his departure, with a two-dollar bill extra in his pocket.

He moved rapidly up the road till he reached the Gratiot branch, when he turned off on the latter course. Pursuing this a short way, he turned aside and entered the dense woods, where he was met by a boy, who appeared to have been waiting for him there.

The boy could not have been over sixteen or

seventeen years of age, and was almost a pigmy in size. He possessed a keen, black eye, a shrewd, intellectual face, and a form, although small, perfect in contour.

It was easy to see that he was no ordinary personage, despite his youth.

"Well, Mr. Griffith, what success?" he asked, as the giant approached him.

"Good; I got to turn the big jug ordered by your man this morning, and I got that for the work," and Mahlon showed him the two-dollar bill.

The boy took a magnifying-glass from his pocket and examined the bill closely.

"That's counterfeit, Mahlon," he finally said; "but I'll give you a genuine bill for it. Here, you see, I'll mark this so that you can swear to it, if need be."

"Wal, now, I'll swar I'd like to know what you're drivin' at!" exclaimed Mahlon.

"I'll tell you, stranger: I'm Johnny Hatch, of Zanesville, the Boy Detective."

"You don't say, do you?"

"Yes, and I'll tell you what I'm after. Them Lake brothers are mistrusted of being counterfeiters, and an awful big reward is offered for their apprehension. I'm trying to catch them. I want to get a hold of their plates on which they make the money; then it will be no trouble to get them and convict them. They're shrewd fellows and have defied all the skill in the State to find their tools and machinery. It's believed their pottery is the place of operations, and that they keep their things concealed there. I've seen them go in there night after night, and always come out empty-handed, but I never can find the least thing suspicious, and I've hunted that shop from cellar to garret a dozen times—pried into every hole and corner."

"Uh-umph!" ejaculated Mahlon.

"Now," continued the lad, "do you think that big jug would hold me, Mahlon?"

"Mortal man! it'd hold three like you, but then you can't git into it now."

"No, but you could get me into another one just like it, couldn't you?"

Mahlon laughed, a good-natured, hearty laugh, then said:

"Ya-as, but who'd ever thought of such an idea but you?"

"I don't know, Mahlon; but I do want to be 'jugged' up so that I can watch them Lakes. The one you made to-day can be destroyed when they're away from the shop, don't you see? and another one made just like it, with me inside. They'll never mistrust any difference. This is what I've been driving at, and, knowing your skill as a potter, I employed you to perform this part. If I succeed in my plans, you'll be well paid."

Again Mahlon laughed; then the two sat down to make further arrangements.

Toward evening they went to a neighboring farm-house and procured supper, Johnny paying.

About dark that night they made their way down to Crown's Pottery. They found it deserted by all the men, the Lakes having gone to their house, half a mile away.

Being provided with a dark lantern, Johnny entered the building, followed by Mahlon. The huge jug still sat on the wheel where the potter had left it, and as no time was to be lost, Griffith tore the vessel down, and out of the "ruins" made another ball of clay, with which he mounted the wheel.

The trade of the potter is one upon which human invention has made no improvement for the past two thousand years, the main part being done with the bare hand, assisted by a thin, smooth board called a "rib." From a round ball of soft clay the skillful turner can shape an exquisite vase or jar in a very few moments, and apparently without any effort.

Mahlon soon had a second jug completed, all but closing the yawning mouth to its proper size. It now resembled a huge jar without a rim, with a mouth sufficiently large to admit the body of the boy detective.

"Now the cage's ready for the bird," whispered Mahlon, with a smile.

"The assistance of the giant potter, the boy was led down into the frail structure, the clay where he was compelled to sit upon his haunches in a rather cramped position.

"Now look out," again whispered Mahlon, "that the turnin' of the wheel don't tip you over. If you touch the side of the thing it's gone, for it's just like a pile of sand—start it, and all creation wouldn't stop it."

"All right, Mahlon," returned the lad. Slowly the wheel began to turn, and in less than a minute Mahlon had closed the mouth of the vessel over the boy until it was but two inches in diameter.

Then the giant potter took his departure from the shop.

Johnny sat silent as death in his frail tenement of clay, fearing to move lest he should tumble it down upon him.

It must have been after midnight when he heard some one enter the shop. At first he thought it was Mahlon come back to look after him, but he knew better when he heard voices in low conversation—the Lake brothers had come, no doubt to ply their nefarious nocturnal work.

The lad's heart almost ceased to beat through fear of detection, but gradually quieting his fears and steadying his nerve, he took a pin and punctured the sides of the jug. Through the small holes thus made, as well as the mouth of the vessel, the little fellow could see that the shop was lit up, and he could hear the brothers talking in subdued tones. He heard them make some remark about the "big jug" and the "big turner," and he felt relieved when he found they did not detect the difference in the two vessels.

Finally he heard one of them say: "Suppose we work on the 'fives' to-night."

To this the others consented; then followed a long silence attended only by subdued whisperings and the rattling of papers. This must have lasted two or three hours when Johnny heard the movement of feet, then to his surprise he heard one of the wheels start to running. What it meant he could not tell, and he was so anxious to know that he was sorely tempted to punch a hole through the side of his covert and peep out. But a second thought told him that such an act might frustrate all his plans and endanger his life; so he waited.

Presently the wheel stopped running, and a few minutes later the light was put out, and the brothers were heard leaving the shop.

Waiting until assured they were beyond hearing, Johnny rose to his feet and burst through the hole which he had made in the side of the vessel, and he saw a chrysalis from its silken shell. The great jug tumbled to a shapeless mass at his feet.

Springing down from the scaffold to the floor, the lad lit his lantern and began searching for the tools of the counterfeiters. But an hour's search proved fruitless; and almost disheartened, he was about to give up and quit the place when he happened to think of having heard a wheel running, and began to wonder what it could have had to do with their other work.

Turning to the wheel he saw a newly-turned jug of about three gallons capacity standing on the head-wheel.

The boy could not have been over sixteen or

A thought flashed in his mind quicker than lightning. If the giant potter could turn a jug over his body, surely the Lake brothers could turn a jug of less size around their counterfeiting plates!

With a bound he reached the wheel, and with a single movement tore away the frail structure of clay, when lo! there were the coveted plates, sure enough—ingeniously concealed—"jugged up," where, not one in a thousand, unacquainted with the manner of turning a jug, would ever have thought of looking for an article as large almost as the vessel itself.

Securing the plates, and ink, and some other things, the boy detective hurried away to where Mahlon Griffith was to wait for him.

The next morning a squad of armed men, headed by Johnny Hatch, the boy detective, called on the Lake brothers and conducted them to safe quarters.

They also searched the shop, and in other unburnt jugs found more plates and counterfeiting material—evidence that the brothers had been carrying on a large business in the manufacture of spurious paper.

Beat Time's Notes.

A MAN generally chews when he chooses.

WISDOM is popularly defined as the art of hiding how little we know.

HOPE is a debtor that always pays part cash and gives a long note for the balance.

THE editors of New York threaten to send all bad poetry to the House of Correction.

A MAN without a wife is about as useless as a half a pair of tongs.

A MAN may be a good man who does not bet, but the man who bets is a better, and it isn't right.

SOME actors have such long names that they have to pack them in a valise whenever they go to travel.

A YOUNG friend who sent his love to a young damsel had it returned, and now he complains because it had no return.

WHEN a man is drowned in the city of Paris the coroner generally returns the verdict, "Died in-Seine," which is proper.

IT seems kind of strange that I never care to play unless I have a good deal of work to do; I get remarkably fond of pastime at such times.

WHEN a man sits down on a chair which isn't under him at all, how fervently does he wish that he had learned the art of swearing in early youth.